इन्द्र को अलंकृत करना III ch. p. 7।

१०.७४.६ वृत्रहेन्द्रो नामान्यप्राः
इन्द्र कौन है? वृत्रहा। IV ch. में।

VṚTRAHĀ INDRA

BY

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Vedic mythology, as we generally know it from the *Ṛgveda* (*ṚV*), is clearly dominated by the personality of Indra. By far the largest number of *sūktas* — about 250 out of 1028 — are exclusively devoted to the glorification of this god. Apart from these *sūktas*, there are several others, wherein Indra is praised in association with other gods or is referred to in some other connection. Indra is thus obviously the most popular god of the Vedic pantheon. Even in later times he has been regarded almost as the very symbol of the official Vedic religion — the Indra-mythology being very nearly identified with the Vedic religion as a whole. It is true that Indra is celebrated in nearly one fourth of the *ṚV*, but this fact must not be taken to indicate, as is usually done, that the Vedic religion had all along been dominated by the Indra-mythology. Such an assumption, which is the result of studying the Vedic mythology as if it were a static phenomenon, would make it difficult rationally to correlate several mythical concepts in the Veda with the facts derived from the study of comparative philology, comparative mythology, anthropology, and the cultural history of the Aryans. A critical study of the Veda would show that the Vedic mythology is essentially an 'evolutionary' mythology; that, at different stages in the evolution of the Vedic mythological thought, it has been dominated by different Vedic gods; and that the Indra-dominated mythology represents but a late stage in the course of that evolution. There is another aspect of this 'evolutionary' character of the Vedic mythology. It will be seen that the personality of a Vedic god normally presents a very complex picture. It often contains elements which are mutually inconsistent or sometimes even self-contradictory. This peculiar mythological phenomenon can be satisfactorily explained only on the assumption that a Vedic god possesses a 'growing' personality. With the different vicissitudes in Vedic life and culture, different elements came to be introduced into the personality of a Vedic god. In other words the dynamic character of the life of the Vedic people is faithfully reflected in the complex make-up of their gods. To emphasize only certain specific elements in a god's personality and thus try to define his character, one way or another, would, therefore, be unsound. What we have to do is to determine, in the light of the facts derived from the study of comparative philology, comparative mythology, anthropology and the cultural history of the Aryans, the priority of these varied elements, and thereby present, so to say, a complete history of the entire 'becoming' of a Vedic god. A study of the Vedic god, Indra, from the point of view of this two-fold evolutionary character of the Vedic mythology, would illumine several obscure points concerning the Vedic mythology in general and the personality of Indra in particular.

If we were to analyse the large number of the *ṚV*-passages referring to Indra and his activities, we would find that they present three main strands of the personality and character of that god. Indra is presented as a cosmic power; as a warlike leader of the Vedic Aryans; and as an ancient mythical dragon-killing hero. Most of the descriptions of Indra are centred round his war with and subsequent victory over Vṛtra. This is by far the most outstanding event in Indra's career. A proper understanding of this event would, therefore, serve as an adequate starting point for a critical study of Indra's personality and character. We may begin with an ancient traditional attempt at interpreting this contest between Indra and Vṛtra. Yāska, the author of the *Nirukta*, has posed the question: *ko vṛtraḥ*: who was Vṛtra?[1] He has mentioned two principal views regarding this question. It appears that, more or less by way of a *pūrvapakṣa,* he refers to the opinion of the Aitihāsikas, who believed that Vṛtra was a demon, a son of Tvaṣṭā. Without, however, caring to discuss and refute this view, Yāska states the view of the school of the Nairuktas, who held that Vṛtra represented a cloud.[1] This passage from the *Nirukta* would thus clearly show that, even since very early times, there have been two principal schools of interpretation of the Vedic mythology-- the historical school, and the naturalistic school. The etymologists, among whom Yāska was the foremost, adhered to the naturalistic interpretation. The influence of the naturalistic school on Vedic studies in general has indeed been very great, and many scholars belonging to the earlier generation of modern Vedists accepted, without demur and almost as the final solution of the problem, the theory that the Vedic gods represented various powers of nature and that the Vedic mythology consisted of symbolical descriptions of various phenomena of nature. Incidentally, it may be pointed out that, among themselves, the naturalistic mythologists are not unanimous as to which specific power of nature a particular Vedic god represented. In pursuance of the naturalistic ideology, the Vedic gods are classified into three categories: those belonging to the sky, those belonging to the mid-region, and those belonging to the earth, in accordance with the cosmic regions where the powers of nature represented by those gods normally become evident.

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[1] *Nirukta* II. 16.

The most dominant view, so far as the naturalistic interpretation of the Indra-mythology is concerned, is the one suggested by Yāska. His lead has been followed by a majority of the early Vedists of the modern times. Indra is said to be the personification of thunderstorm. He stands at the head of the gods of the *antarikṣa* and is verily the rain-god of the Vedic pantheon. The heavenly waters are obstructed by the cloud-demon, Vṛtra. Indra, therefore, smites down this cloud-demon by means of his *vajra* or thunderbolt, and releases the waters, which then flow down in the form of rain-showers. The various descriptions, in the *ṚV,* of the Indra-Vṛtra-battle are said to be clearly indicative of the phenomena of thunderstorm, lightning, and rain. Heaven and earth tremble with fear when Indra strikes Vṛtra with his bolt (I. 80.11 ; II. 11.9, 10 ; VI. 17. 9). Trees are violently shaken and they bend as if in fear (I. 55.4 ; V. 32.10). As a matter of fact, everything trembles when this terrific war between Indra and Vṛtra takes place (VI. 31.2). The thundering god (X. 92.8) raises the dust on high (VI. 18.2). The demon, who obstructs the free flow of waters is variously referred to as Vṛtra, Ahi, Śambara, etc.[1] He lay hidden among the waters (II. 11.5), and Indra is said to have killed him while he was lying across the waters (II. 11.7). Sometimes Indra is said to have torn asunder the mountains and released the waters or cows imprisoned in its caves (I. 32.11 ; 57.6 ; III. 26.6 ; IV. 17.1 ; X. 89.7). 2 This theme is repeated in one form or another in most of the hymns which celebrate Indra's glory (I.32 ; 80 ; II.12 ; 14). A Vedic poet, while proclaiming the heroic deeds of Indra, begins by pointing out that the first of such deeds was that the wielder of the *vajra* slew the dragon lying on the mountain, released the waters, and pierced the belly of the mountains (I. 32.1, 2). In support of their theory that Indra is the Vedic rain-god, scholars 3 have emphasized the fact of his close association with the Maruts. The Maruts, according to them, are clearly the storm-divinities, who help Indra in his great exploit (III. 35.9 ; 47.3-4 ; VI. 17.11 ; VIII. 65.2-3 ; X. 113.3). Indra's connection with the Maruts is so close that the epithet, *marutvān*, is more or less exclusively applied to Indra.[2] It is in their company — and often with their help — that Indra accomplishes all his celestial exploits, particularly his coercion of the evil spirits of air, who arrested rain, and the subsequent deliverance of the heavenly streams (I. 6.5 ; 80.4 ; 100 ; 101 ; 165 ; III. 47.3, 4 ; VIII. 65.2, 3, 4 ; X. 65). Vedists like ROTH (*PW*), OLDENBERG (*Rel. d. Veda*, 29, 51, 134 ff.),[1] MACDONELL (*VM*, 54 ff.), PERRY (*JAOS* 11, 117–205), and BLOOMFIELD (*JAOS* 15, 143), have asserted that the picture of the thunderstorm is throughout quite clear in all these and numerous other descriptions of this kind (I. 32.13 , 52.6 ; 80.12 ; II. 30.3 ; V. 32.4). They, therefore, hold that Indra was essentially a rain-god in the Veda.[2] In this connection, it is assumed that philologically the roots in the words, *indra* and *indu*, are related to each other, and that, as suggested by MAX MÜLLER[3] Indra may have thus been associated with drops of rain-water.[1] It has been further suggested by some of the scholars mentioned above that there was a two-fold development of this basic character of Indra. On the one hand, from a mere god of thunderstorm, he was elevated to the position of an all-god — of the creator and director of the entire universe (I. 52.14 ; II. 30.1 ; IV. 30.22 ; VIII. 85.6 ; X. 54.5) ; and on the other, the Vedic poets brought about the humanization of Indra's divine and cosmic person and described him as a human hero and war-lord (I. 10.3 ; 130.8 ; IV. 26.3 ; VI. 18·3 ; VIII. 14.5, 24, 27 ; X. 49.2).

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[1] **As a matter of fact Yāska mentions the view of the Aitihāsikas after he has mentioned his own. In his commentary on the *ṚV,* Sāyaṇa consistently follows the Nairukta view. (*cf.* his comm. on II. 12.3; III. 33.6).**

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[1] According to MUIR (*OST* V, 95), the demons of drought — the hostile powers in the atmosphere who malevolently shut up the watery treasures in clouds — are called by a variety of names such as Vṛtra, Ahi, Śuṣṇa. DARMESTETER (*Ormazd et Ahriman*, p. 97) calls Vṛtra 'l'enveloppant' while LUDWIG (III, 337) says that Vṛtra keeps away the heavenly waters from the world. PERRY (*JAOS* 11, pp. 117–205) is of the opinion that the different names for Vṛtra are but different names for one and the same thing, namely, the cloud. According to MAGOUN (*The Early Religion*, 106), the Ahi represents originally nothing more than the crest of the approaching thunderstorm looked upon as a gigantic snake.

[2] HILLEBRANDT (*VM* III, 312 ff.), however, believes that Indra's sphere of activity is diametrically opposed to that of the Maruts. He further points out that some Vedic families do not invoke Indra and the Maruts together.

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[1] OLDENBERG believes that Indra is a storm-god, who bears certain pre-Indian features.

[2] ROTH (*Zeller's Theologisches Jahrbuch* 1846, 352) was originally of the opinion that Indra was the god of the bright clear vault of heaven. He derived the name Indra from the root, *idh-indh*, and took it to mean the 'radiant one' (*ZDMG* 1847, 72 ff.). LASSEN (*Ind. Alter.* I, 893) adopted this view of ROTH, though the etymology of the word suggested by him was different from ROTH'S. As a matter of fact, Indra's close connection with the sky was assumed by several other scholars like BENFEY (*OO*, 48 ff.), MAX MÜLLER (*Letters on Science of Language* II, 470), GRASSMANN (*Wb ṚV*), and MYRIANTHEUS (*Die Aśvins*, xvi). BENFEY regarded him as the god of the rain-sky, while MAX MÜLLER held that the real representative of Jupiter, in the Veda, was not Dyaus but Indra. According to that scholar and MUIR (*OST* V, 77) Indra was to be identified with Jupiter Pluvius. Later on, however, MAX MÜLLER calls Indra the chief solar deity of India (*Chips* II, 91). It hss been pointed out by PERRY (*op. cit.*) that Indra cannot be regarded as a deity of the sky. He is essentially the deity of the mid-region. According to Yāska, Sūrya is the god in the sky. Indra (or Vāyu) in the *antarikṣa*, and Agni upon the earth. PERRY further suggests that, among all Indo-European mythologies, this division of the universe into three regions is peculiar to the Vedic mythology. The original functions of Dyaus, as conqueror of cloud demons, were, according to him, transferred by the Indian to another god, namely Indra, who was a specifically Indian divinity. This gave rise to Indra's supposed identification with the sky. The theory about Indra being a sky-god has, however, not found much favour with the later Vedists, even though they accepted the naturalistic interpretation of the Vedic mythology. There are indeed only two most popular variations of the naturalistic interpretation of the Indra-mythology — namely, to view Indra either as a rain-god or as a sun-god. Only these two, therefore, have been discussed at some length in this paper.

[3] *Chips*, New Ed. IV, 396. Also MACDONELL, *VM*, 66.

Let us critically examine the theory that Indra is the rain-god in the Veda. It must be mentioned, at the very outset, that there undoubtedly are, in the personality of Indra as represented in the *ṚV*, a large number of elements of the character of a rain-god. But we may ask : can these elements be said to be the basic elements in Indra's character ? And, secondly, can these elements alone be said to indicate the entire personality and character of that god ? A minute and careful consideration of the descriptions in the *ṚV* of the Indra-Vṛtra-contest brings out some significant facts in this connection. It will be seen that, in all such descriptions, the words like 'thunder', 'cloud', 'lightning', 'rain', etc., seldom occur directly. The waters, which Indra is credited with having released and let flow, are often terrestrial, rather than celestial, waters. The terms, which are frequently used in these passages, are 'thunderbolt', 'mountain', 'fortresses', 'cows', 'light', 'waters', etc. One would, therefore, be justified in asking whether the main intention of the Vedic poets could have really been to suggest the phenomena of thunderstorm and rain through the symbolism of the Indra-Vṛtra-war[2]. The occurrence, in the

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[1] Some scholars suggest that *indu* may rather indicate the drops of Soma of which Indra is so fond. BENFEY seems to connect the word, *indra*, with the root, *syand*. ROTH, giving up his original suggestion, derived it from the root *in-inv* (= to press, to urge) with suffix *ra* for *nomina agentis* and the addition of euphonic *d*. Indra thus means one who urges on or presses forward (the rain-water ?).

[2] Even OLDENBERG holds (*R. d. V.*, 140) that the 'mountains' mentioned in the Indra-Vṛtra-conflict are not to be understood symbolically as clouds, but that, for the Vedic poet, they were real mountains. So too the rivers were not celestial waters but actual rivers on the earth, particularly Vipāś and Sutudrī.

ṚV, of poetic symbolism is, it may be pointed out, quite understandable. But at least once in a while we should have come across Vedic passages which are unequivocably indicative of the phenomenon of rain. Indeed BERGAIGNE seems to be right when he suggests[1] that there is, in the *ṚV*, no clear mention of Indra's being responsible for the rain-fall[2]. The symbolism of *vajra*, *parvata*, *pur*, *gauḥ*, etc., can be interpreted — and this, more or less satisfactorily — in several ways. As a matter of fact it is actually interpreted variously. It is verily difficult to understand why the Vedic poets should have described the basic character and exploits of their principal god in such vague and indefinite terms. 2 (ii) (iv)

The identification of Indra with the rain-god is based on some other identifications, which seem to be taken for granted. Indra's *vajra*, for instance, is understood to be the regular mythological name for lightning. But do the Vedic passages referring to *vajra* support such an exclusive assumption ? The *vajra* is generally described as *āyasa* or metallic (I. 52.8 ; 57.2). It is said to be four-angled (IV. 22.2), hundred-angled (IV. 17.10), hundred-jointed (VIII. 6.6), and thousand-pointed (I. 80.12). It is sharp (VII. 18.18), and Indra whets it like a knife (I. 130.4 ; 55.1). Such descriptions are too specific to be regarded as symbolically indicative of lightning. Moreover, though *vajra* is Indra's special weapon, it is not the only weapon which he uses. He is sometimes described as being armed with a bow and arrows (VIII. 45.4 ; 66.6, 11 ; X. 103.2-3), or as carrying *aṅkuśa* (X. 44.9). These latter descriptions can hardly be said to fit in with the rain-god-theory[3]. Another equation, on which the rain-god-theory is based, is that Vṛtra is the cloud-demon. Several objections can be raised against this equation. To begin with, it may be pointed out that the word

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[1] *ṚV* II, 185.

[2] According to GRUPPE (as quoted by HOPKINS, *JAOS* 36, 255), it was actually open to question whether Indra to the Vedic poets themselves was a deity who gave rain. HILLEBRANDT has pointed out (*VM* III, 165) that Indra can be said to have been mentioned clearly as the giver of rains only in 6 passages in the *ṚV*. These passages form but an insignificant minority against those which speak of the deliverance of waters in general. (iii)

[3] HILLEBRANDT has rightly pointed out (*VM* III, 165) that the *vajra* need not be necessarily regarded as the distinctive characteristic of a storm-god.

varəthra occurs frequently in the *Avesta*. That that word is philologically the ancient Iranian cognate of the Vedic word *vṛtra* is beyond any shade of doubt. In a subsequent part of this paper, we shall have to consider the word *vṛtra* in all its aspects. In the present context, however, it may be pointed out that, in the *Avesta*, v the word *varəthra* does not signify a cloud-demon even remotely. Further, in the *Avesta*, we come across a god called Vṛthragna, but he is in no way connected with the rains.[1] Again, supposing that Indra was the rain-god in the Vedic mythology, no rational explanation can be given of the fact that Andra, who is obviously the vi ancient Iranian counterpart of Indra, is represented, in the *Avesta*, as an obnoxious demon. Why should a mere rain-god of the Veda have been transformed into the third worst devil in the Iranian mythology?

In the descriptions of the Indra-Vṛtra-contest the Vedic poets have frequently used certain words and idioms in a more or less technical sense, such as, for instance, *api + dhā*, *gras*, *bādh*, *rudh*, *vṛ*, *stabh*, *pari + sthā*, etc. HILLEBRANDT has made a critical and analytical study of all such words and has come to the conclusion that they do not fit in well with the phenomenon of rain.[2] It will vii be thus seen that the descriptions, in the *RV*, of the Indra-Vṛtra-contest are such as do not warrant the assumption that they indicate, primarily and unequivocably, the phenomenon of rain. Even if the symbolism in those descriptions were to be considered from the naturalistic point of view, it may be possible to interpret it in terms of some other natural phenomena as well. It does not, therefore, stand to reason to suggest, on the strength of such indefinite evidence, that Indra was basically a rain-god.

There is another significant point to be noted in this connection. In the Vedic mythology there are three divinities, which are more or less closely connected with the phenomenon of rains: Trita Āptya, Parjanya, and Indra. From among these three, Indra viii seems to be later than the other two. As a matter of fact, Indra seems to have been added to the Vedic pantheon later than

IX [illegible]

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[1] According to SPIEGEL (*Arische Periode*, 197), the regular rain-god of the ancient Iranian mythology is Tištar.

[2] *VM* III, 174-75.

many other gods. The tradition preserved in the ***Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa*** (II. 2.3.3 ; II. 2.7.2), namely, that Prajāpati created all gods but not Indra, and that Indra was later generated among them as a new power is highly significant in this connection. Indra is referred to in the *Taittirīya Saṁhitā* (II. 3.4.2) as *devānām ānujāvara*. Under these circumstances a question may occur: why did the Vedic poets feel the necessity of creating a new rain-god when they already had two in their pantheon. If, on the other hand, it were suggested, for the sake of argument, that the concept of Indra is earlier than that of either Parjanya or Trita Āptya, it may still be asked, and, perhaps, with greater relevance, why the latter two apparently subsidiary rain-divinities should have been thought of by the Vedic mythologist when already there existed, in the Vedic pantheon, a very prominent rain-god, namely, Indra. As regards Parjanya, it might be argued that between Indra and Parjanya there is no absolute similarity. For, while Parjanya is the rain itself, Indra represents the rain-giving god.[1] No such distinction can be made between Indra and Trita Āptya. The character of Parjanya, in the Veda, is quite transparent; but that of Trita Āptya is rather vague and obscure.

There are, in the *ṚV*, forty passages which refer to Trita Āptya, and, taken collectively, they seem to indicate, albeit vaguely, that god's connexion with atmospheric waters. For instance, it is said that when the mighty Maruts go forth, Trita thunders, and waters roar wandering in their course (V. 54.2).[2] Such a connexion can be confirmed also by an etymological consideration of the name–Āptya.[3]

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[1] It may, however, be incidentally pointed out that the magic charms for the bringing of rain are predominantly addressed to gods other than Indra.

[2] MACDONELL (*JRAS* 1893, 419 ff.) has tried to show that Trita Āptya represents the third form of Agni. He is, according to him, the divinity of lightning. The peculiar relationship between Indra and Trita cannot, however, be adequately accounted for if MACDONELL'S view were to be accepted. Moreover in V. 54·2, Trita is clearly distinguished from lightning. Also *cf.* M. FOWLER, *JAOS* 67, 59-60. BLOOMFIELD (*JAOS* XVI, cxix) regards Trita as scapegoat of gods.

[3] Obviously, the word *āptya* is philologically connected with *āp* (= water). GÜNTERT, however, tries to connect it, not very convincingly, with *āpiḥ* and interprets it as 'friend' (*Weltkönig und Heiland*, 33). K. RÖNNOW (*Trita Āptya : Eine vedische Gottheit.* Uppsala 1927) holds that the original form of Trita's name was *Trīto*—. He has dealt, in great detail, with Trita's character as a spirit of the waters, lustratory genius, dragon-slayer, and the brewer and dispenser of Soma.

In the *ṚV*, Trita sometimes appears in the special capacity of a preparer of Soma (II. 11.20; IX. 32.2; 34.4; 38.2; 102.2). This secondary trait accruing to him must have obviously been the extension of his primary character, namely, that of the bringer of rains.[1] A critical examination of the *ṚV*- passages referring to Trita brings forth an illuminating set of facts so far as his relations with Indra are concerned. Though, in some passages, he appears as almost identical with Indra so far as his activities in connection with the rain-phenomenon are concerned (I. 187.1; VIII. 7.24), there is absolutely no doubt that Indra and Trita were distinct personalities. Again, it would become quite clear that though Indra also is called Āptya (X. 120.6), Trita must have been the original Āptya. The earlier occurrence in the *Avesta* of the ancient Iranian counterpart of the latter, namely, Thrita, than that of Indra is indeed a significant point of evidence in this connection[2]. But a still more significant piece of evidence is *ṚV* I. 52.5, where Indra is described as having performed the feat of conquering the rain-stealers *in the manner of Trita*. This passage clearly shows that the function of overcoming the cloud-demons and releasing the celestial waters originally belonged to Trita, while, later on, Indra stepped into the shoes of that original Aryan rain-god and imitated him in the exploit of bringing rains. Trita's victory over the rain-stealers must have been regarded as so primary and characteristic an achievement of his as to be mentioned as an illustration (I. 52.4-5; V. 86.1).

Three distinct stages may be marked in the development of the rain-god-mythology in the Veda. The Vedic poets must have originally glorified the rain-god of their Aryan ancestors, namely, Trita Āptya. This god thus found a place in the mythologies of both the branches of the Aryans, namely, the ancient Iranians and the Vedic Indians. Later on, as the result of some peculiar mythological development among the latter, a new god came to be regarded as the rain-god in the Vedic mythology. That god was Indra. But even after Indra's celebration as a rain-god, in the *ṚV*, the original Aryan rain-god was not altogether forgotten. As shown above, Indra was described as imitating Trita in his feat of conquering the rain-stealers (I. 52.5). There are, however, unmistakable indications in the *ṚV* that Indra was gradually superseding the original rain-god. Whenever Trita appears with Indra, the former is clearly represented as the subordinate of the latter (II. 11. 19-20 ; VIII. 12.16 ; X. 8.7-8 ; 99.6).[1] Moreover a large number of Vedic passages referring to Trita are such as would suggest that that god had been slowly but surely sinking into oblivion. He is never presented in clear and life-like form, but is mentioned in cursory allusions. Trita is said to be dwelling in the farthest distance (I. 105.9 ; VIII. 47. 13-17), beeause, as ROTH rightly points out[2], he had gradually become more and more obliterated from memory[3]. The fact that Trita is not at all mentioned in certain *maṇḍalas,* such as, the second, the fourth, and the seventh — particularly, the seventh — is also highly significant in this context[4]. This subordination of Trita by Indra represents the second stage in the evolution of the Vedic rain-god-mythology. In the last stage, Trita, who was the original Aryan god of storm and rain, indeed older than Indra, was completely shelved into the background as the result of the growing popularity of Indra as the rain-god. It is suggested[5] that dim reminiscence of Trita's vanished glory and an allusion to his final subordination may be lurking in II. 34.10. Trita is there said to have been given over to the derision of the worshipper. All this discussion will have now made it amply clear that Indra was not the original rain-god of the Veda, and that, as the result of some peculiar mythological development, the character of a rain-god must have been superimposed on his primarily different personality. It may be incidentally pointed out, in this connection, that the line of contact between the Indo-European stormgods on the one hand and Vedic Indra on the other is nowhere distinct or even provable.

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[1] The ancient Aryan clans, who had specialised themselves in the preparation of Soma (Haoma), may have, later on, been named the Āptyas (Āthwyas).

[2] The counterpart of Indra namely Andra appears in the *Avesta* at a later stage, and that too as a demon. In the *Avesta*, the personality of the Aryan Trita is, so to say, split up into two. As Thrita, he is connected with the preparation of Haoma, while, as Thraetaona, he slays the fiendish dragon (Azi Dahāka).

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[1] If closely studied, such passages seem to show that Trita and Indra have been connected with each other artificially and rather as the result of a purposeful afterthought. KOSAMBI says ("Origin of Brahmin Gotras". *JBBRAS* 26, p. 64) : 'Knowing what we now do of the Aryan invasion, it seems plausible that Trita is Indra or one of the invading Aryan chiefs, later collectively deified under the title of Indra'.

[2] 'Die Sage von Feridun', *ZDMG* II, 221.

[3] The few *Atharvaveda* passages referring to Trita also suggest the idea of a remote god.

[4] It is not unlikely that there were originally quite a large number of Vedic *mantras* celebrating Trita ; but they were not all preserved owing to the definitely deteriorating position of that god.

[5] E. D. PERRY. Indra in the Rig-Veda. *JAOS* 11, 117 ff.

It should be further remembered that Indra is a god, who originated and grew specifically among the Vedic Aryans. If it were to be supposed that he had been a rain-god from the very beginning, it would be difficult satisfactorily to explain why the Vedic poets should have created a new rain-god of a specifically Indian origin. Moreover, the facts that Indra was elevated to the position of the national god of the Vedic Indians and that he came to be regarded as the true symbol of their official religion cannot be adequately accounted for on the assumption that Indra's basic character was that of a rain-god. Why should a rain-god have been raised to that position in India, but not elsewhere? There is one more point, which definitely goes against the assumption of Indra's basic character as a rain-god. As a matter of fact, that point can be raised, with equal relevance, against all naturalistic interpretations of the Indra-mythology. A more or less detailed reference will have to be made, in a subsequent part of this paper, to the human character of Indra as presented in certain passages of the Veda. A careful study of such passages would at once convince one that they cannot have been the result of the humanization of an originally naturalistic divinity. Some details of the human aspect of Indra's personality, such as the mysterious manner of his birth, his assuming various forms, his peculiar interest in the welfare of unmarried girls, his great fondness for the intoxicating beverage, Soma, which is sometimes made fun of by the Vedic poets, and several others, which will be mentioned later, are so realistic and intimate that it would be difficult to believe that they are artificially superimposed on Indra's original character as a rain-god by the fancy of the Vedic poets. We have, therefore, to conclude that, though there are, in the personality of Indra as presented in the *Ṛ V*, certain elements normally belonging to the rain-god-mythology, these elements cannot be said to represent either the primary or the exclusive traits of his basic character.

HILLEBRANDT has interpreted the Indra-Vṛtra-war in quite a different light — though, again, mainly from the naturalistic point of view[1]. He had originally adopted the popular view that Indra is the rain-god of the Vedic pantheon. Later on, however, on a closer examination of the literature (both Vedic and post-Vedic) and ritual relating to Indra, he found it necessary to revise his views more or less radically. As indicated elsewhere, he started by critically studying the words and idioms, such as *api + dhā, bādh, vṛdh, vṛ*, etc., which are frequently used in the descriptions of the evil deeds of Vṛtra, from which Indra is said to have brought about deliverance. These words and idioms, according to him, cannot be understood to refer, even remotely, to the phenomenon of rain. Again, the *parvatas* (or *adri, aśman*), which also are often referred to in that context, do not signify the clouds[2]. As a matter of fact, clouds are distinguished from the *parvatas,* for, it has been said that the wings of the *parvatas* were cut off and that those wings became clouds. And, why should clouds have been regarded as demons ? In Indian literature, generally a cloud is hailed as the bringer of rains and not condemned as the obstructor of celestial waters. HILLEBRANDT has, therefore, suggested that the waters obstructed by Vṛtra were not the celestial rain-waters, but that they were actually the streams of earthly rivers. According to him, the evolution of the Vedic mythology is not necessarily restricted to the geographical limits of India. He further points out that, so far as the Indra-Vṛtra-legend is concerned, there is sufficient ground to assume that, in its original form, that legend was not indigenous to India, but that it was carried by the Vedic people from outside India to their new home. The season, in which Vṛtra is described as lying on the mountains, cannot be the summer. In that season, the waters are not locked up ; on the other hand, the rivers are in spate as the result of the melting of the glaciers in the North-Western mountains.

In the opinion of HILLEBRANDT, Vṛtra is the winter-demon, who locks up the flow of the river-streams. At the advent of the spring, Indra, that is to say, the sun-god, overpowers Vṛtra, the winter-demon, and releases the waters. It is the winter — and not cloud — which is universally regarded as the obstructor of waters.[1] In the winter, the streams in the North-Western region dwindle away. But as the mountain-snows melt, on the approach of the Indian summer, followed by the rainy season, the waters rise and overflow the surrounding country.[2] In support of his theory that Indra was primarily the sun-god, who conquered the winter-demon, Vṛtra, and thereby released the locked-up waters, HILLEBRANDT has tried to adduce much evidence. In the frequent allusions to Vṛtra as *śayāna* (sleeping), he finds a suggestion of the winter representing the 'sleep of nature'. In the *Atharvaveda* (III. 10.12), Ekāṣṭakā, that is, the new-year's night, is said to be the mother of Indra, thus implying that Indra is the symbol of the advent of the new year, that is, of the spring. One of the demons, killed by Indra, is called Rauhiṇa. This may be but one of the many names by which Vṛtra is referred to in the Veda. HILLEBRANDT interprets Rauhiṇa as the moon, and confirms the identification of Vṛtra with the winter by pointing out that the moon is the lord of the winter. Coming to the Vedic ritual, HILLEBRANDT emphasizes the facts that the mid-day oblation (*madhyāhna-savana*) is normally offered to Indra (because he is the sun-god)[3] and that Indra is associated with *grīṣma*.[4]

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[1] *VM* III, 1902, pp. 155-344.

[2] HILLEBRANDT also points to the significant absence, in those descriptions, of such unequivocal terms as *abhra, megha,* etc.

A careful examination of the evidence, adduced by the sponsors of the rain-god - thery and the sun-god - theory in support of their respective theories, would seem to show that these theories cancel each other. Broadly speaking, most of the objections raised against the first naturalistic interpretation of the Indra-mythology, which has been discussed above, can, with equal validity, be raised against this second naturalistic interpretation as well. It may be pointed out, for instance, that Vṛtra's counterpart in the *Avesta* does not signify the winter-demon even remotely. What, again, is the *vajra* of the sun-god ? [1] If Indra were originally a sun-god belonging, as HILLEBRANDT suggests, particularly to the pre-Indian Vedic mythology, no satisfactory explanation can be given as to why he should have been condemned to the position of a demon in the ancient Iranian mythology. Further, there was already, in the Vedic pantheon, one sun-god, namely, Sūrya. What could have been the specific reasons for introducing a new sun-god ? As a matter of fact, Indra and the sun are often mentioned side by side thus indicating their distinct personalities (I. 32.4 ; 51.4 ; II. 12.7 ; III. 31.15 ; VI. 17.3 ; 21.3 ; VIII. 12.30 ; X. 171.4). Again, the elevation of a solar divinity to the supreme position in the Vedic pantheon cannot be adequately accounted for.

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[1] HILLEBRANDT has supported this statement by means of several quotations from ancient and modern literature.

[2] *cf.* HUNTER, *Atlas of India*, p. 7, as quoted by HILLEBRANDT. HILLEBRANDT also quotes from *Arrian*, Anab. V. 9.4; BALFOUR, *Cycl. Ind.* s. v. Indus; THORNTON, *Memoir on maps illustrating the ancient geography of Kāśmīr*, p. 99. etc.

[3] *cf. Śatapatha Br.* II. 4.4.12-13.

[4] *MS* II. 7.20; *TS* II. 1.2.5; *ŚPB* XIII. 5.4.28.

The descriptions, in the *ṚV*, of the Indra-Vṛtra-battle are such as produce the impression that that battle must have been particularly violent and fearful (I. 80.11 ; II. 11.9-10 ; VI. 17.9). In overpowering Vṛtra, his vanquisher, Indra, had to perform enormously terrific feats (I. 32.5 ; 57.6 ; 80.14). Such descriptions would appear quite incongruous when related to the spring-time sun. At the advent of the spring, the sun appears as a particularly life-giving and energising power rather than as a fearful giant. Further, it is to be seriously doubted whether the phenomenon of the dwindling away of rivers in the winter, even in the regions mentioned by HILLEBRANDT, was actually so very common and significant in the life of the Vedic people as to be made the central theme of the mythology relating to their greatest god. The idea of glaciers, etc., which are supposed to be locking up the waters of the rivers, is nowhere unequivocally presented in the *ṚV*. HILLEBRANDT's suggestions that Rauhiṇa, as the moon, is the lord of the winter and thus represents the winter-demon killed by Indra, and that the references to *śayāna* Vṛtra may poetically signify the 'sleep of nature' (that is, the winter) are obviously too far-fetched. Nor need much weight be attached to the facts that the *madhyāhna-savana* is assigned to Indra or that Indra is associated with the *grīṣma*. Firstly, such assignments and associations are, more than anything else, the result of ritualistic schematism. And, secondly, if HILLEBRANDT's theory were to be accepted, Indra should have been connected with the *vasanta* rather than the *grīṣma*. Other features of the Indra-mythology, particularly Indra's close association with the Maruts and his proverbial fondness for the intoxicating beverage, would not fit in well with the sun-god-theory. The human elements in Indra's character are, as indicated above, too vital and realistic to be regarded merely as the result of anthropomorphic tendencies. It is, therefore, difficult to accept HILLEBRANDT's theory that Indra originally represented the sun-god[1].

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[1] As pointed out by HOPKINS (*JAOS* 36, 242 ff), the use of stone and metal as synonymous with Indra's missile bar out the suggestion that his normal weapon might be the burning sun-beams.

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[1] Several other variations of the solar theory have been proposed by scholars. MAX MÜLLER, for instance, sees in the Indra-Vṛtra-myth the symbolical description of the daily triumph of light over darkness (*Contribution to the Science of Mythology* I, pp. 141-42). It may be recalled that he identified Indra also with Jupiter Pluvius (*Letters on the Science of Language* ii, 470). He believes that Vṛtra is primarily the demon of darkness and that the vascillating of poetic imagery between dark night and dark cloud would be quite in keeping with the Vedic myth-making. B. G. TILAK (*Arctic Home*, 233 ff.), who propounded the theory that Vedic mythology, as a whole, can be best understood only by relating it to the natural phenomena observable in the Arctic region, saw in Indra the sun-god, who overpowered the demon of darkness who dominated that region continuously for some months. V. A. GADGIL suggests (*ABORI* XXIII, pp. 134 ff.) that Indra and Varuṇa represent the two aspects of the central Vedic concept of *ṛta*. Varuṇa, according to him, is the representative of the passive moral principle while Indra is the representative of the highest physical aspect of nature. GADGIL further suggests that the concept underlying the Indra-Vṛtra-myth is the eternal conflict between *tejas* and *tamas*. It may be pointed out that GADGIL'S interpretation, besides not being supported by Vedic evidence, is far too abstract. It is indeed doubtful whether Vedic poets ever made a clear-cut distinction between the physical and the non-physical aspects of nature. More or less the same thing can be said about the theory of FATEH SINGH (*JBHU* 5), who sees in Indra the deity of universal light and energy. He interprets the myth of Indra's birth through the side of his mother as representing the first light of dawn which is visible in a circular way. R. SHAMA SASTRI (*B. C. Law Comm. Vol.* I, 277-281) connects the Vedic mythology with astronomical bodies and phenomena. According to him, Indra is the sun fighting with the eclipse-demon. Śambara, he explains (*Thomas Comm. Vol.*, 257-61), is an eclipse-demon of the type of Rāhu and Indra's battle with him represents a slow clearance of the eclipse. A reference may, in passing, be made also to the theory put forth by P. C. SENGUPTA (" When Indra became *maghavan* ", *JASBL* IV, 445 ff.) that Indra was the god of the summer solstice. Indra became *maghavan* when the sun at the summer solstice reaches the *maghā* constellation. According to SENGUPTA, this happened in 4170 B. C. He further identifies *aśleṣā* with *ahi* and suggests that *ahi* means the clouds which were seen in the sky from the rising of *aśleṣā* which did not yield rain till the rising of *maghā*.

As a matter of fact, that scholar himself could not altogether overlook the fact that the elements relating to the phenomenon of rain are sufficiently prominent in Indra's personality. He, therefore, concluded that Indra was originally the sun, but, in the *ṚV*, is no longer the sun-god, while not yet a rain-god[1]. For, as he points out, the six passages in the *ṚV*, which unequivocally refer to Indra as giver of rains, occur in the fourth, the eighth, and the tenth *maṇḍalas*, which fact would indicate, according to him, that the character of Indra as rain-god was still not established in the Ṛgvedic times. HILLEBRANDT, however, does not seem to have taken into account the fact that several descriptions of the Indra-Vṛtra-fight in the *ṚV*[2] though not necessarily indicative of Indra's essential character as rain-god, do indirectly imply the phenomenon of storm and rain. Those descriptions may not — and, as shown above, do not — prove that Indra was primarily a rain-god. But they do certainly indicate that, among the naturalistic elements superimposed on Indra's original character, those normally connected with a rain-god are more prominent.

The foregoing discussion of the two principal naturalistic interpretations of the Indra-mythology will have made it amply clear that the naturalistic or cosmic elements could not have been either the basic or the primary elements in Indra's character[3]. They clearly produce the impression of having been superimposed on the original personality of that god. Our aim will, therefore, be, firstly, to find out what the original character of Indra must have been, and, secondly, to describe and rationally account for the circumstances under which the cosmic elements must have been superimposed on his personality[1].

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[1] *VM* III, 195–96. *cf.* HOPKINS, *op. cit.*

[2] OLDENBERG has shown (*NG* 115) that the theme of the Indra-Vṛtra-fight is treated in all the *maṇḍalas* of the *ṚV*.

[3] The very significant remarks made in this connection by HOPKINS (*Religions of India*, p. 91) may be quoted here with advantage. HOPKINS says: "...... Indra has been identified with 'storm', with the 'sky', with the 'year'; also with the 'sun' and with 'fire' in general. But if he be taken as he is found in the hymns, it will be noticed at once that he is too 'stormy' to be the sun; too 'luminous' to be the storm: too near to the phenomena of the monsoon to be the year or the sky; too 'rainy' to be fire; too alien from every one thing to be any one thing ...... "

One thing which would strike even a casual student of the Indra-mythology is the fact that in no other god of the Vedic pantheon are the features of human appearance (*ākṛti*) and character (*prakṛti*) so conspicuously prominent as in Indra. A closer examination of the descriptions of Indra's person and character would further convince one that so plastic a figure as his and so essentially human a behaviour as is attributed to him cannot be considered to have been the result of mere anthropomorphism. It may be pointed out that, as against the vague and indefinite naturalistic elements, the human features in Indra's personality are so realistic and life-like, that one feels inclined unhesitatingly to accept the latter as more basic and essential. Indra's body, head, arms, and hands are very often referred to (II. 16.2 ; VIII. 85.3). He is said to be golden in colour (I. 7.2). His body is gigantic ; his neck mighty ; and his back brawny. His arms are sleek, and his hands thick and firm — both right and left — being particularly well-shaped (I. 80.5 ; 102.6 ; IV. 21.9 ; VI. 19.3 ; VIII. 70.1). He has handsome cheeks (or lips), and is, therefore, often called *suśipra* (II. 12.6 ; 33.5), *śiprin* (I. 29.2 ; III 36.10), or *śipravān* (VI. 17.2). He is tawny-haired (X. 96.5,8) and tawny-bearded (X. 23.4). These and several other similar descriptions of Indra's person unmistakably produce before our mind's eye a very life-like picture of a tall, strong, well-formed, handsome, blonde Aryan. Far more life-like, however, are the descriptions of some peculiar physical mannerisms of that god. He agitates his jaws (VIII. 65.10), or puffs out his beautiful lips (III. 32.1), in a characteristic fashion, in anticipation of or after the Soma-draught. Once he is described— very realistically, indeed — as shaking off the drops of Soma from the moustaches (II. 11.17). There are references to another peculiar movement of the upper lip, and to the shaking of the beard (X. 23.1 ; 26.7). Such characteristic physical traits and mannerisms must necessarily be distinguished from the very general human traits attributed to a god as the result of the normal anthropomorphic tendencies. Indra's appearance and mannerisms are so very individualistic that they seem to have been derived from a specific human person.

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[1] Some other theories regarding the basic character and personality of Indra have also been put forth by scholars. HOPKINS, for instance, believes that Indra was originally a god of fertility (*JAOS* 36, pp. 242 ff.). In support of his theory, that scholar has adduced evidence from the epic, post-Vedic, and Vedic sources. In the epics, Indra is called *pākaśāsana* (= crop-controller ?), and the festival of Indra is always associated with harvest and fertility rather than with victory. In the *Pāraskara GS* (II. 17.9), Indra's wife is said to be Sītā, that is, personified furrow. Indra figures as the foremost among the gods worshipped at the ceremony of first starting the ploughs (*cf. Gobhila GS* IV. 4.28). In *AV* 4.4.4, Indra is said to be responsible for putting virility in the *oṣadhis*. Indra is described in the *ṚV* as *urvarāpati* ; he wins the tilth, is lord of tilth, as he is lord of cattle (II. 21.6 ; VI. 60.1 ; VIII. 21.3). Such references, according to HOPKINS, indicate that Indra was first celebrated as a demon of fertility. He was then accepted as the chief war-god among two or three clans. (HOPKINS has elsewhere — *JAOS* 37, 83 ff. — tried to show that the combination of gods of war and fertility is not uncommon). From a war-god he was later on elevated to be the greatest god of the larger group of clans. Without examining, in detail, the views of HOPKINS, we may only point out that several of the objections raised against the rain-god-theory or the sun-god-theory can be raised, with equal appositeness, against the fertility-god-theory as well. The references to this aspect of Indra's character are clearly secondary and incidental. It is not unlikely that the hints regarding the power of fertility possessed by Indra are due to the combination of the elements of the rain-god and the sun-god, which were superimposed on his personality. It is well known that the sun and the rain together cause fertility.

One great draw-back of the naturalistic and similar other interpretations is that their sponsors seem to view Vedic mythology as if it were a static phenomenon. They forget that, in consonance with the various vicissitudes in the Vedic way of life and thought, there must have been inevitably effected significant modifications in the Vedic mythology as well. Therefore to emphasize only one aspect of the personality of a Vedic god without taking into account the other aspects and thereby try to determine the basic character of that god is bound to prove a faulty procedure. It would lead but to a partial picture of the personality of that god.

Another peculiarity, which clearly distinguishes Indra from other major gods of the Veda, is the fact that he is frequently referred to as having been born. Two entire hymns, namely, III. 48 and IV.18, deal with the subject of his birth. In one of these hymns, Indra is said to have been born in an unnatural way, that is, through the side of his mother (IV. 18.1-2). A special reference to such an unusual phenomenon would become meaningless unless there had been in vogue, among the people, some such traditional belief relating to the birth of an actual human hero. As is well known, such miraculous birth is always associated, in the popular mind, with a great and unique person[1]. It is further not unlikely that the reference to Indra's having killed his father in order to snatch away Soma from him and thus made his own mother a widow (III. 48.4; IV. 18.12) is the result of popular myth-making based on an ordinary historical fact such as that Indra's father died suddenly soon after his birth[2]. Indra's miraculous power is said to have become evident as soon as he was born (VIII. 45.4-5). In X. 153.1, there is a reference to the infant god surrounded by attendant women. Another interesting reference is to be found in VIII. 58.15, where the immature boy, Indra, of head-strong temperament, is spoken of as having mounted a new wagon, and roasted, for his parents, a fierce bull. All these descriptions point unmistakably to the basic human character of Indra's personality.

A reference has already been made elsewhere to the traditional belief that Indra is a later addition to the Vedic pantheon. This very significant tradition cannot be adequately explained except on the assumption of Indra's primarily human personality. It implies that Indra was not originally a god, but that he was a human hero who attained to godhead by virtue of his miraculous exploits. Not only that, but he soon superseded the older gods (VII. 21.7) and came to be regarded as the foremost among them (II. 12.1).

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[1] Attention may be drawn to the myth regarding Alexander's alleged miraculous birth. Such myths do not affect the historicity of the hero about whom they are narrated. The naturalistic interpretations of this myth, such as that it may have been derived from the notion of lightning breaking from the side of the storm-cloud (MACDONELL, *VM*, 56), or that it refers to the first light of dawn, which is visible in a circular way (FATEH SINGH, *JBHU* 5), are clearly unconvincing. According to W. Norman BROWN (*Siddheshwar Varma Comm. Vol.*, 1950, pp. 131-36), there is no necessity of assuming Indra's unnatural birth from his mother's side. He interprets the phrase, *pārśvānnirgamāṇi*, in the sense of 'accompanying'. See also BROWN, *JAOS* 62, pp. 93-95.

[2] E. SIEG ("Indra und der Somaraub nach dem *ṚV*". *Jacobi Comm. Vol.*, 228-239) tries to correlate the apparently varying accounts regarding Indra's nativity given in *ṚV* III. 48 and IV. 18. According to him, Vyaṁsa (IV. 18.9) seems to have been the father of Indra. This Vyaṁsa was a Dāsa and Indra killed him. Tvaṣṭā, on the other hand, mentioned in III. 48.4 and IV. 18.3, was Indra's 'great father' (III. 48.2), that is, Indra's maternal grandfather. SIEG accordingly says that Indra belonged to the Dāsas, on the father's side, and, to the gods (Aryans), on the mother's side.

This fact is mythologically represented in a variety of ways in the later Vedic literature (*TS* II. 3.4.2 ; *MS* I. 9.4 ; *TB* II. 2.3.3 ; II. 2.7.2 ; *ĀB* VIII. 4.12).

But by far the most convincing proof of the essentially human character of Indra is the fact that the Vedic poets have often referred to what may be called the ‘weaknesses’ of that god. One such ४ oft-mentioned weakness is Indra's proverbial fondness for Soma. His immoderate indulgence in the intoxicating beverage is a favourite theme of the Vedic poets. Indra is spoken of as having gone to the extent of stealing Soma to quench his thirst (III. 48.4 ; VIII. 4.4). He was *somapā par excellence.* But his was not merely an addict's passion for drink. For, Soma always exhilarated him to carry out his warlike deeds (II. 15.1 ; 19.2; VI. 47.1-2 ; VII. 22.2 ; VIII. 81.6). For instance, in order to prepare himself for a decisive war with Vṛtra, Indra is described — of course, hyperbolically — to have drunk three tankfuls of Soma (V. 29.7). But the most significant *sūkta*, which must needs be mentioned in the present context, is X. 119. [1] In this *sūkta*, Indra is represented as being under the influence of an excessive draught of Soma and boasting of his greatness and capricious power. As PERRY has rightly pointed out, [2] Indra's condition after a drink of Soma parodied in this *sūkta* is too realistic not to be considered human. It is a fine example of caricature and would remind one of modern newspaper caricatures — either in the form of humorous articles or of cartoons — in which innocent fun is made of some foible in the character of a great personage. No disrespect is, however, thereby intended. On the other hand, by lightheartedly poking at such a foible, that high personality is brought nearer to the hearts of the people, for, it indeed emphasizes his essential humanness. As a matter of fact, it is believed that such harmless foibles enhance, rather than detract from, the genuine greatness of that person. Indra, the human hero, must have been in the habit of indulging in a more or less sumptuous draught of Soma in order to invigorate himself before entering battle. This well-known habit of his seems to have been made the subject of a delightful parody in the *Laba-sūkta*.

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[1] This *sūkta* is traditionally known as the *Laba-sūkta*.

[2] PERRY, *op. cit.*

II. 15.7 Vel – He knows the hiding (of their child boy) the maidens –
maiden's son cf. [illegible] IV. 19.9

Similarly Indra is represented as an expert in female lore (VIII. 33.17). He seems to have taken a peculiar interest in the welfare of the children of unmarried girls (II. 15.7). As a domestic aider and as particularly interested in girls not yet married, he appears in the form of the 'little man' invoked by Apālā (VIII. 91), who chews Soma-plant and prepares grain for him that he may make her friutful.[1] In *AV* (VIII. 6.13), Indra is said to come to the help of a pregnant woman. Though Indra's amorous adventures are nowhere clearly mentioned in the *ṚV*, there are, in it, few faint indications of that trait of his character. These latter must have indeed been the basis of Indra's representation, in later mythology, as a romantic figure — a 'gay Lothario'[2]. In the *Atharvaveda*, Indra is once said to have been enticed away by an Asura female (VII. 38.2). In another Vedic passage[3], we are told that Indra, being enamoured of a *dānavī*, named Vilisteṅgā, went to live among the Asuras, assuming the form of a female among females and of a male among males. A mention must also be made, in this context, of the famous Vṛṣākapi hymn (X. 86). In that hymn, Indra is spoken of as having been exhausted when a bold, lascivious monkey administered to him some medicine, through which Indra regained his manly power. As shown in another paper[4], this Vṛṣākapi is to be identified with the fertility-god Viṣṇu. The whole episode may thus refer to Indra's efforts to preserve his virility intact[5]. Such descriptions of a more or less 'intimate' character must be understood to refer to the actual life of a human hero before he became the supreme god.

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[1] *cf.* HOPKINS, *op. cit.*

[2] *cf.* HOPKINS, *op. cit.*

[3] *Kāṭhaka* III. 47.9. It is not unlikely that this passage and the passage from the *AV* mentioned above (namely, *AV* VII. 38.2) refer to one and the same incident.

[4] DANDEKAR, "Viṣṇu in the Veda". *Kane Comm. Vol.*, pp. 95-111.

[5] According to MACDONELL (*VM*, 64), this hymn describes a dispute between Indra and his wife, Indrāṇī, about the monkey, Vṛṣākapi, who is the favourite of the former and has damaged the property of the latter. Vṛṣākapi is soundly thrashed and escapes, but afterwards returns, when a reconciliation takes place. PERRY (*JAOS* 11) sees in this hymn a satirical description of Indra's domestic life. BRADKE (*ZDMG* 46, 465) also considers the story to be a satire, in which, under the names of Indra and Indrāṇī, a certain prince and his wife are intended. A critical study of the hymn would, however, show that none of these interpretations is satisfactory.

It may be pointed out, in this connection, that the Vedic poets have never unnecessarily overidealised the character of Indra, which they would have done had he been primarily thought of as a god. Indra was essentially a man of this world, and, as such, he did not disdain deceiving his enemy or cleverly circumscribing the conditions of an agreement whenever circumstances so demanded[1]. Another very significant reference, so far as Indra's original character is concerned, is to be found in I. 32.14, where the mighty Indra is said to have been overcome with fear when, after killing Vṛtra, he thought that some avenger of the enemy was following him. Such a reference would be hardly understandable in relation to a god, who had been conceived as a god from the very beginning.

The Maruts are described as the constant associates of Indra in his mighty deeds. Indra is accordingly called *marutvān* and the Maruts are referred to as *indrajyeṣṭha*[2]. But the proverbially harmonious relations between the heroic leader and his loyal followers seem to have been disturbed on certain occasions (I. 170.2 ; 171.6 ; VIII. 7.31). It was either cowardice or treachery on the part of the Maruts, which must have estranged them from Indra. Indra is represented as telling them, in derision, that they were not eager to accompany him when he went to the battle-field, but that, when he was invited to a sacrifice, they did not want to leave him alone (I. 165). This realistic legend relating to the temporary estrangement between Indra and the Maruts must have been based on an actual episode, and would thus prove the historicity of Indra as much as his essentially human character. The facts that Indra is described as wandering in various forms (I. 51.9 ; III. 53.8 ; VI. 47.18)[3], and that his enemies did not first realise the greatness of his prowess or altogether refused to believe in his very existence

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[1] *cf.* Indra–Namuci episode : V. 30.7 ; VIII. 14.13.

[2] For a more detailed discussion about the relation between Indra and the Maruts, see the concluding part of this paper.

[3] Indra is said to have assumed, at different times, the forms of a woman (Menā– *cf.* HILLEBRANDT, *VM* III, 172), horse's hair (*cf.* GELDNER *Ved. Stud.* II, 183), an ant (I. 51.9), a dancer (I. 130.7 ; II. 22.4), etc. Also see VIII. 2.40. B. GEIGER has connected the ten forms of the Avestan Vṛthragna with Indra's transformations (*SAW Wien* 1916, 69 ff.). GÜNTERT refers to the latter in connection with Viṣṇu's various incarnations (*Der arische Weltkönig*, 308).

(II. 12.5) further confirm the primariness of the human traits in Indra's personality as well as his historicity.

More prominently and frequently, however, than the mere human traits have the heroic traits in Indra's personality been celebrated in the *ṚV*. Indra's name itself verily comprises all notions relating to virile power.[1] He is often very significantly called, or compared with, a bull, who was regarded as the symbol of such power (I. 165.11 ; II. 16.4 ; V. 31.5 ; VIII. 1.1). Indra is superhumanly mighty (I. 80.15 ; VI. 21.10 ; VII. 21.7 ; VIII. 50.2); he is dreadful (I. 84.2, 7 ; II. 21.2); he is indeed invincible (IV. 17.19 ; 30.3, 5). No one born, past or present, can rival him (I. 165.9). Several epithets expressive of excessive power, such as ***śakra***, *śacīvat*, *śatakratu*, ***manasvān***, etc., are frequently attributed to Indra. Indra's *śuṣma* and *nṛmṇa* (II. 12.1) are often referred to and his eternal youth and vigour (II. 16.1 ; III. 32.7 ; VI. 24.7 ; X. 86.11) have become almost the hallmark of his personality. But there is also another side to Indra's heroic character. He is exceedingly generous (I. 30.1 ; IV. 31.7 ; VIII. 14.4 ; 24.21 , 54.7 ; 70.3). He freely bestows goods and wealth on the pious man (II. 19.4 ; 22.3 ; VII. 27.3) ; and this he can easily do, for, he possesses all treasures (I. 30.10 ; VI. 45.8). As a matter of fact, Indra's liberality had become so very characteristic of him that he almost entrirely monopolised the proud epithet, *maghavā*.[2] Indra's wisdom and prudence also are frequently celebrated in the *ṚV* (I. 62.12 ; II. 16.2 ; VIII. 85.3).

It will be thus seen that Indra's personality presents a curious combination of 'human' and 'superhuman' or 'heroic' elements. As a matter of fact, it is this combination of the 'human' and the 'super-human', which makes Indra's personality so 'living' and so attractive. The incongruity between the human aspect of Indra's personality characterised by sensuousness and similar other normal 'weaknesses', on the one hand, and the superhuman aspect characterised by miraculous powers, generosity and similar other traits of heroic perfection, on the other, is not due to the 'more intense anthropomorphism of Indra's nature'[3]. It is rather the result of the sincere efforts on the part of the Vedic poets to present a realistic picture of a historical human hero, who, while accomplishing almost superhuman deeds, still exhibited the essential humanness of his character. In the light of what has been said above, it would be very interesting to see how the Vedic poets approach their favourite national god, Indra, in varying attitudes — sometimes in a ' crouching, pusillanimous spirit and fear of his violence ', at other times, on remarkably intimate and friendly terms, but always exhibiting great devotion and fidelity towards him, a firm belief in his miraculous powers and a ' touching reliance upon his goodness '.[1]

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[1] **For a detailed philclogical study of the name 'Indra', see the sequel of this paper.**

[2] *cf. yudhi-vīra* **and** *dāna-vīra* **of classical Sanskrit.**

[3] *cf.* MACDONELL, *VM*, 65.

On the strength of the evidence adduced so far, we may now be justified in concluding that Indra must have been primarily a human hero — indeed, essentially a historical personality —, that, in course of time, he must have been elevated to the position first of a national war-god, and then of the supreme god, and that, later on, naturalistic or cosmic elements must have been superimposed on his personality.[2] How can we account for this ' growth ' of Indra's personality ? In order to be able to answer this question satisfactorily, we shall have to go back to the cultural history of the ancestors of the Vedic Indians.

As indicated in another paper,[3] we may assume, on the strength of linguistic, archaeological, anthropological, and culture-historical evidence, that the proto-Indo-Europeans had their original home in the Ural - Altaic region. Some tribes from among this proto-IE stock migrated from their primary *Urheimat* towards the South-Eastern direction and ultimately reached the region around Balkh. There they lived for a considerable length of time before further migrations started from among them. As a matter of fact, these tribes remained in the region round about Balkh so long that they almost forgot their connections with their primary *Urheimat*. For our present purpose, it is neither necessary nor desirable to go into the details of this whole problem of the original home of the Indo-Europeans and their early migrations. It may only be pointed out that these people, who lived in the region of Balkh, were the proto-Aryans. In the initial stages of the proto-Aryan period, there took place some stray and desultory migrations mainly towards the South-Western Asiatic region. But, even after these small-scale migrations, the main stock of the proto-Aryans, which was made up of the common ancestors of the Vedic Indians and the ancient (Avestan) Iranians — who are popularly, and, from several points of view, appropriately, known as the Aryans — continued to live in the Balkh region for a pretty long time.

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[1] *cf.* PERRY, *op. cit.*

[2] It may be pointed out, in this connection, that, from the anthropological point of view also, ' naturalism ', as propounded first by Yāska and then by ROTH, MAX MÜLLER, OLDENBERG, MACDONELL and others, often represents but a later stage in the development of mythological ideology.

[3] DANDEKAR. 'The Antecedents and the Early Beginnings of the Vedic Period'. *PIHC*, Bombay 1947, pp. 24-55.

It was indeed in this region that the 'Aryan' language and religion attained 'characterisation'. In other words, the common primary form of the languages and the religions of the *Ṛ V* and of the *Avesta* must have evolved while the common ancestors of the Vedic Indians and the ancient Iranians lived together in their common home in the Balkh region. The most characteristic feature of the religion of these people, which we may call the 'Aryan' religion, seems to have been the concept of Asura Varuṇa.[1] In the course of the evolution of their religious thought, the Aryans had realised that this universe, vast as it was, was not 'chaos'. Every single phenomenon—big and small — in cosmic as well as human life was governed by some definite law. The universe was, as it were, magically 'bound' down and thus strictly regulated. It was, in other words, 'cosmos'. The concepts of the cosmic law, *ṛta*, and of the administrator of that law, the cosmic-magician Varuṇa, represents the most outstanding contribution of the Aryans to religious thought in general. In that age, the life of the Aryans had been so closely bound with nature, from several points of view, that it was but inevitable that they should have evolved the religious concept of the cosmic-magic-bondage. No doubt, there must have grown, among the Aryans, several other religious concepts and practices, such as, for instance, those connected with Soma-Haoma and fire; but the *Asura-Ṛta* - concept seems to have completely dominated the Aryan religious ideology.

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[1] DANDEKAR. '*Asura* Varuṇa'. *ABORI* XXI, 157-91; also see 'The Antecedents etc.' *PIHC*, 1947.

As has been already indicated, the Aryans did not live in the region around Balkh permanently. Further migrations started from that region. As compared with the major primary migrations of the Indo-Europeans from their *Urheimat* in the Ural-Altaic region, the migrations of the Aryans from the Balkh region may be called the secondary migrations in the history of the Indo-European peoples. Some tribes from among the Aryans who were of a peace-loving temperament moved towards the South-West. Gradually, and without having to encounter any serious hindrance, they migrated to the north of Iran and subsequently settled in that country. These were the ancient Iranians. As may be expected, they had brought with them, to their new home, the Aryan language and religion in their basic forms. Naturally enough, in course of time, the ancient Iranians must have developed the basic Aryan language and religion in their own peculiar manner. The other Aryan tribes, however, were more ambitious and warlike. From their home in the Balkh region these adventurers set out on a mission of conquest and colonization towards the South-East. This, however, was not an easy task. On their onward march these people, who were really the ancestors of the Vedic Indians, had to encounter serious opposition from several antagonistic tribes. Their gradual progress towards Saptasindhu, where they ultimately settled down, makes a long tale of a series of wars. But through all these wars, the early Vedic people were finally led to victory by a heroic compatriot of theirs, whom they very appropriately called Indra.

It may be presumed that the tribes who tried to arrest the onslaught of the Vedic Indians came from various stocks. From the descriptions in the *ṚV*, it would appear that they were racially and culturally quite different from the Vedic Aryan adventurers. They are generally said to have been black-skinned (I. 130.8; II. 20.7; III. 34.9), and snub-nosed (V. 29.10). Their speech was barbarous (I. 174.2; V. 29.10; 32.8); they did not perform any sacrifices as the Aryans did (I. 33.4; VII. 6.3; VIII. 70.11); they did not worship the Aryan gods (III. 31.19; VIII. 70.11); and, above all, they did not recognise the national hero of the Vedic Indians, namely, Indra (IV. 23.7; VII. 18.16). These antagonistic tribes, who are variously described as having stolen away the cattle of the Aryans (II. 12.3 ; III. 30.10; VI. 39.2), or pent up the streams of the rivers (I. 32.12; II. 12.12; III. 26.6; IV. 17.1), or attacked the Aryans, from their secret recesses in the mountains (II. 12.11), or fought with them from their fortified settlements (II. 14.6; 19.6; VIII. 17.14), are sometimes individually named,[1] while, at other times, only the names of their leaders are mentioned,[2] but, more often, they are all collectively referred to as the Dāsas (I. 51.8 ; II. 12.10 ; X. 38.3; 86 19).[3] Indra, the young, blond, bearded, handsome, well-shaped, mighty, heroic leader of the Aryans, invigorated by a drink of Soma, is variously described as having protected the Aryans from the attack of the Dasyus (VIII. 24.27) ; subjected the Dasyus to the Aryans (IV. 18.3) ; put down the *dāsa varṇa* (II. 12.4) ; overpowered the black-skinned foes (I. 13.8 ; III. 34.9) ; dispersed 50,000 of them (IV. 16.13) and rent their citadels (I. 51.5; IV. 16.13) ; surpassed the Paṇis in might (VI. 20.4; VII. 56.10), and recovered the cows (X. 108). Many were the hostile leaders conquered by Indra.[1] Many again were the Aryan chiefs and tribes to whom Indra is said to have rendered timely succour in several ways.[2] The Aryan warriors soon learnt to depend on Indra's help and so constantly invoked him (II. 12.8; IV. 24.3). For, they looked upon him as their one compassionate helper (I. 84.19; VIII. 55.13; 69.1), as their deliverer and advocate (VIII. 85.20), as their very strength (VII. 37.5) — a veritable wall of defence (VIII. 69.7). Never indeed did he fail them (X. 152.1). With his special thousand-pronged weapon, *vajra* (I. 80.20), he smote down the barbarous enemies (I. 101.5 ; VI. 23.2), and gave land to the Aryans (IV. 26.2). He thus assured for them a smooth career of conquest and colonization. It is, therefore, no wonder that such a leader should have soon become a national hero and then a national god of the Vedic Indians.[3] A warring people would naturally glorify to the utmost a warlike god.[4] This heroic god of battle, though a later addition to the Vedic pantheon, soon surpassed all earlier gods (III. 46.3), who yielded to him in might and strength (VIII. 51.7). Even, the important older gods subordinated their power to Indra's divine glory and kingly dignity (VII. 21.7). This elevation of a national hero to the supreme godhead must be assumed to have belonged to a period subsequent to the bifurcation of the Iranian Aryans and the Indian Aryans. Such an assumption alone would rationally explain why Indra is traditionally regarded as *devānām anujāvara,* and why this supreme god of the Vedic Indians should not have found place in the Avestan pantheon.

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[1] Such as, for instance, Dasyu (I. 100.12 ; II. 20.8 ; X. 99.7) ; Paṇi (VI. 20.4 ; 39.2 ; VII. 56.10) ; perhaps Pṛthu and Parśu (VII. 83.1).

[2] Such as, for instance, Arbuda (I. 51.6 ; II. 11.20) ; Aśna (II. 14.5; 20.5) ; Ilībiśa (I. 33.12) ; Uraṇa (II. 14.4) ; Krivi, (II. 17.6 ; 22.2) ; Cumuri (VI. 26.6) ; Dṛbhīka (II. 14.3) ; Namuci (II. 14.5 ; V. 30.7–8 ; VI. 20.6); Pipru (I. 101.2 ; II. 14.5 ; IV. 16.13) ; Rudhikrā (II. 14.5) ; Rauhiṇa (I. 103.2 ; II. 12.12) ; Varcin (II. 14.6) ; Vyaṁsa (I. 101.2 ; 103.2) ; Śambara (II. 12.11 ; IV. 47.21 ; VII. 18.20) ; Śuṣṇa (V. 32.4 ; X. 22.4).

[3] It is very likely, as HILLEBRANDT has pointed out (*VM* III, 268 ff.), that Dāsa itself was originally the name of some inimical tribe, such as the Dahae, whom the Aryans must have encountered in the course of their early wanderings. Later on, however, that word came to be applied to any tribes hostile to the Aryans. These unfriendly tribes were referred to as the *dāsa varṇa* (II. 12 4), implying thereby that they were racially distinct from the Aryans, or the *dāsīḥ viśaḥ* (II. 11.4 ; IV. 28.4 ; VI. 25.2). In later mythology, Dāsas came to denote demons in general. The word, *dāsa*, is used in the *ṚV* in the sense of 'slave' only three times. Incidentally it may be pointed out that, though the words, *dāsa* and *dasyu*, are often used in the same sense, originally the word, *dasyu*, did not have the same meaning as the word, *dāsa*. HILLEBRANDT suggests that the antagonism between the Āryas and the Dāsas was of a political character while that between the Āryas and the Dasyus was more of a religious nature. TAVADIA, however, affirms (*VBQ*, 1940) that Dasyu also was originally the name of a people or country and that the bad connotation came to be attached to that word at a later stage. According to Kasten RÖNNOW ('Vedic *Krivi*'. *AO* XVI, 161–80), the Dāsas mentioned in the Veda were the Nāga-worshipping native tribes. He further points out that this serpent-cult predominated in the regions on the Himalayan slopes.

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[1] See foot-note 2 on page 28 above. It should be noted, in this connection, that the descriptions, in the *ṚV*, of many of Indra's warlike expolits are such as clearly produce the impression of actually being the accounts given by eye-witnesses.

[2] The *ṚV* refers to Indra's benefactions to Kutsa (V. 29.10), Turvaśa and Yadu (II. 15.5 ; V. 31.8 ; VI. 45.1 ; VIII. 10.5), Sudās (VII. 19.3 ; 20.2 ; 32.10-11 ; 33.1), Mudgala and Mudgalānī (X. 102) ; Kakṣivat (I. 51.13), etc.

[3] Such a historical interpretation of the evolution of the Indra-myth alone would explain why, in no other Indo-European mythology — not even in the Avestan mythology — do we find an exact counterpart of the Vedic Indra.

[4] H. LOMMEL (*Der arische Kriegsgott*) emphasizes the basic character of Indra as the Aryan war-god. L. von. SCHROEDER (*Herakles und Indra*, Wien 1914) suggests that the many common traits in the character of Indra and Herakles would indicate their common origin. PIGGOTT (*Prehistoric India*, p. 260) rightly points out that Indra is the apotheosis of the Aryan battle-leader.

Such then is briefly the story of the genesis of Indra's godhead. One thing, however, must be necessarily emphasized in this connection. It will be easily realised that all the warlike exploits, which, in the *ṚV*, are attributed to Indra, could not have been accomplished by one single individual. Many of them must certainly fall to the credit of the historical hero. But when history becomes mythology, an individual also tends to be more or less turned into an institution. Such is normally the course of mythological development, particularly in the Veda. When, therefore, the historical Indra was transformed into a national war-god, all mighty deeds of prowess—real or imaginary—came to be regarded as his handiwork. It may also be pointed out, in this context, that the warriors of the Vedic age invoked Indra for help not only in their battles with the Dāsas and other inimical tribes. There was a period in the history of the Vedic people when different Vedic tribes fought among themselves. In such civil wars, both sides invoked Indra for help (II. 12.8). Indra is, therefore, often described, in the *ṚV*, as the valiant vanquisher of the Dāsa foes as well as of the Ārya foes (VI. 22.10; 33.3; 60.6; VII. 83.1; X. 69.6). This fact would again confirm Indra's essential character as a war-god.

This elevation of a historical hero to the position of the national war-god of the Vedic Indians was accompanied by the superimposition, on the original character of Indra, of certain features which were derived from a significant mythological concept belonging to the common Aryan period. It has already been pointed out that the most predominant religious concept, which was evolved during the Aryan period, was that of Asura Varuṇa. Side by side with that concept there were evolved, in that period, other religious concepts and practices as well. One such religio - mythological concept was that of Vṛtra - Vṛtrahan. A very detailed study of this concept has been made by BENVENISTE and RENOU in their excellent monograph, *Vṛtra et Vṛθragna*[1]. These scholars have shown, in a convincing manner, that the basic idea suggested by the linguistically cognate words, *vṛtra* in the *ṚV* and *vṛthra* in the *Avesta*, has been conserved only in the *Avesta*. These words have to be derived from the root **var* meaning 'to resist'[1]. From that root, the neuter substantive, *vṛtra*, is formed[2]. The original sense of the word *vṛtra* is, therefore, merely 'resistance'[3]. In the *Avesta*, the concept is never personified. The word *vṛthra* is never found there to have been used to denote the agent of resistance. In the *ṚV* also, the word is very frequently used in neuter plural — *vṛtrāṇi*. These facts would show that, during the common Aryan period, there existed among the ancestors of the ancient Iranians and the Vedic Indians a more or less general concept of *vṛtra* - *vṛthra*, that is to say, resistance. Closely related to that concept there also evolved the equally general and colourless concept of *vṛtrahā* - *vṛthragna* — the divine power which overcomes such resistance[4]. It must be emphasized that neither the concept of *vṛtra* nor that of *vṛtrahan* had originally any specific physical or human basis. In a sense, they were more or less 'abstract' concepts.[5] The elevation of Indra to the position of the national war-god — which mythological phenomenon was restricted only to the Vedic Indians — conferred a new meaning on the *vṛtra* - *vṛtrahan* concepts. Those 'abstract' concepts were, so to say, given some 'concrete' basis in the course of the development of Vedic mythology. The historical hero, Indra, overcame a number of human foes who had 'resisted' the onward march of the Vedic Indians. These human foes, thus, naturally, came to be looked upon as the Vṛtras[1]. And correspondingly the more or less colourless and abstract divinity, which overcame resistance, namely, Vṛtrahan, came to be merged into the historical hero, who actually overcame the human Vṛtras[2]. A Vedic Indian historical current and an ancient Aryan mythological current thus combined to evolve the later Vedic mythological concept of Vṛtrahā Indra. As against this, among the peaceable ancient Iranians, there was no scope for such historical concretisation of the concepts of Vṛtra – Vṛtrahan. Those concepts have, therefore, conserved their original abstract sense in the *Avesta*[3]. It must be pointed out, in this connection, that, even in the *ṚV*, the frequent occurrence of the neuter plural, *vṛtrāṇi* (VI. 22.10 ; 60.6 ; VII. 83.1), betrays the original impersonal and abstract connotation of the word.

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[1] BENVENISTE, E. and RENOU, L. *Vṛtra et Vṛθragna* : *Étude de mythologie indo-iranienne.* Paris 1934.

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[1] Yāska (*Nir*. II. 5) derives the word *vṛtra* from the root *vṛ* (= to cover), the root *vṛt* (= to roll), or the root *vṛdh* (= to grow).

[2] Compare, in this connection, similar formation *mitra* from the root * *m(e)i-* (= to bind) [*vide* DANDEKAR. '*Asura* Varuṇa'. *ABORI* XXI, 157-91].

[3] Particularly resistance in a defensive sense. The Avestan usages point to the fact that *vṛthra* is often the counterpart of *ama* (= the power of offence). The significance of 'victory', which is conventionally attached to that word is quite erroneous. This is confirmed by the examination of all its compounds and of all the adjectival epithets applied to it in the *Avesta*.

[4] It is suggested that Vṛthragna is one of the pre-Zoroastrian deities opposed by Zoroaster, but afterwards introduced into his religion.

[5] As pointed out by BAILEY (*BSOS* VII, 975), the interpretation of the expansion of the Vṛthragna worship gains much from the consideration, in the monograph by BENVENISTE and RENOU (pp. 68 ff.), of Hellenistic *Artagnēs*, Armenian *Vahagn*, Chorasmian *Arthagn*, and Sagdian *Vašagn*.

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[1] BUDDHA PRAKASH suggests (*ABORI* XXX, 163 ff.) that the Vṛtras defeated by the Vedic Aryans actually represented a specific pre-Vedic Indian people. He is inclined to identify them with the Veretatae or the Oraturae mentioned by MEGASTHENES in *Indika*. BUDDHA PRAKASH further points out that the Vṛtras possessed the elements of the Dasyus and the Asuras, that their habitat was the Himalayan range of the North-West (Incidentally it may be mentioned that, while discussing the question of 'The Cradle of the Indra-Vṛtra Myth', K. CHATTOPADHYAYA [*Proc. VI AIOC*, 529–33] suggests that Semirechinsk in Russian Turkestan [which, according to him, is identical with the Vedic Saptasindhu] must have been the region where that myth came to be evolved), and that their religion was characterised by serpent-symbology (*cf.* in this connection RÖNNOW'S views mentioned in foot-note 3 on page 28). Considering, however, the facts that the word, *vṛtrāṇi*, occurs in neuter plural, that the Vṛtras both among the Āryas and the Dāsas are mentioned in the *ṚV*, and that, in the *Avesta*, the word, *vṛthra*, occurs without any historical significance, it is difficult to accept the identification of the Vṛtras with any specific people. *Vṛtrāṇi* indicates foes in general.

[2] That the concept of Vṛthragna is specifically Aryan, and, therefore, earlier than that of Indra, which is specifically Indian, is confirmed by the fact that the word, Vṛthragna, occurs in the earlier strata of the *Avesta*, such as the Sirōzah, the Yašts, and the Āfrigans, while the word Andra, representing the demonisation of the Vedic god, Indra, occurs only in the later strata, as also by the fact that, in the *Avesta*, the concept of Vṛthragna receives a more or less detailed treatment, while that of Andra occurs only in a casual manner. As a matter of fact, the name Andra occurs, in the *Avesta*, only twice (Vid. X. 9; XIX. 43).

[3] It would not be logical to suppose that the Vedic Vṛtrahā Indra was the original concept and that it was separated into two independent concepts in the Avestan mythology. For, as KEITH points out (*IC* I, 461 ff.), it is more natural for India to unite ideas than for Iran to separate them. Moreover it would not be adequately understandable why, if the Iranians had actually separated into two the concept of Vṛtrahā Indra, the epithet, namely, Vṛtrahā, should have been regarded as divine, while the substantive, namely, Indra, should have been regarded as demoniac.

The history of the concept of Vṛtra is closely linked up with the course of the evolution of the Indra - mythology as a whole. Originally, the word, *vṛtra*, significantly used in neuter gender, expressed the general idea of 'resistance'. It was in no way connected with the concept of Indra, which, as a matter of fact, had not then even arisen. This was the state of things in the common Aryan period. When the historical hero, Indra, came to be glorified among the Vedic Indians, they personified the impersonal concept of Vṛtra, which they had inherited from their Aryan ancestors. Vṛtras then came to denote the human foes, whom Indra, the national hero of the Vedic Indians, valiantly put down. Soon Indra, the national hero, was deified by the Vedic poets. Corresponding to this deification of the human Indra, there took place the demonisation of the human Vṛtra. At this later stage of the Ṛgvedic mythology, the historical human Vṛtras were collectively transformed into the one 'demon', who prominently opposed Indra, the great god. And still later, when naturalistic elements came to be superimposed upon Indra's original personality so that Indra came to be regarded as the rain-god, there was a corresponding naturalistic transformation of Vṛtra's personality so that he came to be looked upon as the cloud-demon[1]. It will now become perfectly clear why, in the Avestan mythology, there is a divinity, Vṛthragna, but no demon, Vṛthra ; why the Avestan Vṛthragna and Andra are in no way connected with each other ; why, in the *ṚV*, Vṛtrahan lost his character as an independent divinity and that word became merely an epithet of Indra ; and, finally, why in the *ṚV*, the word, *vṛtra*, is employed, in neuter plural, to denote the human foes, and, in masculine singular, to denote a demon.

It has been already pointed out that the origin of the religious practices connected with Soma-Haoma must be traced back to the common Aryan period. The ancestors of the Vedic Indians and the ancient Iranians, who lived-together in the Balkh region, must have soon discovered the remarkable properties of the Soma plant, which grew in abundance on the slopes of the Mūjavat mountain situated close to their common habitat. The intoxicating juice extracted from this plant must have been originally used in connection with some primitive magic ritual. Anthropological investigations would amply testify to the practice of the primitive priests taking some such intoxicating decoction with a view to producing in themselves a peculiar magic-orgiastic ecstacy[1]. With the rise, among the Vedic Indians, of the valiant hero, Indra, Soma-drinking came to be naturally associated with him. It may be said that, in a sense, the intoxicating drink began to be used for a purpose which cannot be said to have been strictly ritualistic. A draught of Soma, before entering battle, would banish all fear from the hearts of the warriors and put new vigour in them. This must have indeed been a most common experience.[2] It is quite understandable that Indra, the warrior-leader, should have been described as indulging in the Soma-drinking more freely than others. As a matter of fact, in course of time, immoderate indulgence in the Soma-drinking came to be regarded as a distinctive trait of Indra's character — at once the strength and the weakness of the national hero. And, as shown elsewhere, the Vedic poets have actually treated it as such in their glorification of Indra. Indra became *somapā par excellence.* (II.12.13). He is often described, in the *RV*, as being exhilarated by a drink of Soma to carry out his warlike deeds (II. 15.1; 19.2; VI. 47.1,2; VII. 22.2; VIII.81.6). Whatever Indra accomplished he owed to the magic power of Soma. Sometimes, however, the Herculean head of the hero must have become befogged by an overdose; and it is such a condition which has been beautifully caricatured by a Ṛgvedic poet in X. 119. The Vedic poets refer to Indra as a 'thirsty stag' (VIII. 4.10), or a 'thirsty bull' (I. 130.2), or a 'thirsty buffalo' (I. 16. 5). Indra is so eager for a drink that he cannot wait until

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[1] It would thus be clear that Vṛtra originally represented neither the cloud, as suggested by the Nairuktas, nor the demon-son of Tvaṣṭṛ, as suggested by the Aitihāsikas.

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[1] *vide*, for instance, O. PERTOLD. 'The liturgical use of Mahuda Liquor by Bhīls.' *Arch Or.* III, pp. 400 ff.

[2] Not only the botanical properties of the Soma plant but also the faith that the juice of the plant possessed ritualistic-magic character must have worked in producing the effect.

Soma is drawn for him (X. 116.4), but 'gulps down cask and lancet and all.'[1]

The concept relating to Soma is thus the second Aryan religious concept — the first being the Vṛtra-Vṛtrahan-concept — which has been combined with the Vedic Indian historical concept of the national hero. The more or less secular significance with which the concept of Soma came to be endowed on account of its connection with the historical warrior, Indra, must, however, be considered to have been but a temporary phase. With the elevation of Indra to godhead and the gradual development of the regular Vedic ritual, Soma again attained, in the fullest possible measure, its original magico-ritualistic significance (which, as indicated above, it must have never lost altogether), and Soma-worship became a very prominent feature of the Vedic religion.[2] 2

In view of the continued warlike activities of the Vedic Indians, it was but natural that they should have elevated their national war-god, Indra, to the supreme godhead in their pantheon. This gesture on their part gave rise to quite a serious mythological upheaval. It will be remembered that Asura Varuṇa was the supreme god of the common religion which the ancestors of the Vedic Indians and the ancient Iranians had evolved. This Asura-dominated religion was inherited both by the Indian Aryans and the Iranian Aryans. The Iranian Aryans seem to have faithfully stuck to that religion. As a matter of fact, in the normal life of those people, there does not seem to have occurred any very significant event, which could have influenced their religious ideology to any appreciable extent. Of course, in course of time, they developed the Asura-religion of their Aryan ancestors in their own peculiar manner, so that it eventually took the form of the religion presided over by Ahura Mazdah. The case of the Vedic Indians, on the other hand, was essentially different. As has been already pointed out, the Vedic Indians were ambitious adventurers. They, therefore, set out on a career of warlike activities, valiantly fighting their way towards the Saptasindhu country. In this their new career, they must have found that the cosmic-magic Asura-religion, which had come down to them from their Aryan ancestors, was not at all adequate. A warring people, as suggested above, necessarily wants a war-god —rather than a god presiding over cosmic law — as their supreme god. The Vedic Indians, therefore, transformed their national hero, Indra, into such a war-god, and, in consonance with their new way of life and thought, worshipped him as their greatest god. Thus, in the religion of the Vedic Indians, Indra ultimately superseded Asura Varuṇa. In other words, the new Vedic religion prevailed over the ancient Aryan religion.

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[1] PERRY, *op. cit.*

[2] In the Iranian religion, on the other hand, the Aryan religious practices relating to Soma-Haoma seem to have gradually dwindled in importance. The Haoma is not referred to in the *Gāthās* of the *Avesta*. This silence is probably significant. In his religious reform, Zoroaster seems to have rejected Soma-worship. RÖNNOW ('Vedic *Krivi*', *AO* XVI, 161-180) believes that Soma once belonged to the Nāgas and was sacrificed for them. An analysis of the Soma-sacrifice, according to him, would bring out clearly traces of ancient Indian serpent-cult. Incidentally it may be added that RÖNNOW regards Soma as the divine vivifying essence of water (*Trita Āptya*, Uppsala 1927).

A critical study of the *ṚV* would show that, in that Veda, three distinct phases of the relation between the ancient Varuṇa-religion and the new Indra-religion can be clearly marked. Some passages
1 in the *ṚV* (I.24.6 ; 25.10 ; II. 27.10 ; VII. 87.5,6 ; VIII. 41.7 ; X. 132.4) are still found to glorify Varuṇa as the world-sovereign. They thus seem to preserve the memories of the religious ideology of the pre-Indra Aryan period. This represents one phase. The
2 major portion of the *ṚV*, however, clearly indicates that Varuṇa-religion was being put into the background and the Indra-religion was aggressively coming to the forefront. The *ṚV* hymn, IV. 42, is a highly significant document in this connection. Varuṇa is shown in that hymn to assert his right to supremacy and to adduce valid reasons in support of his claim (st. 1-4). Indra is made to say that Varuṇa's arguments did not concern him in the least and that, in virtue of his being the strongest god, he—Indra—must necessarily be regarded as the supreme god (st. 5-6). Eventually the poet recognises unreservedly the supremacy of Indra (st. 7). This hymn thus represents, in an unmistakable manner, the supersession of Varuṇa by

Indra.[1] According to PERRY,[2] another hymn, namely, *ṚV* X. 124, exhibits the transference of supremacy from Varuṇa to Indra in a very peculiar light. Agni is there represented as abandoning father Varuṇa and going over to Indra. The fact that hardly a dozen hymns in the *ṚV* celebrate Varuṇa exclusively while Indra is glorified in nearly 250 hymns is again clearly indicative of Indra's ascendancy over Varuṇa.[3] As will be shown later, this mythological supersession of the Asura by Indra, which represents another phase of the Indra-Varuṇa-relationship, gained a peculiar significance from two points of view—first, from the point of view of the relations between the Vedic religion and the Iranian religion, and, secondly, from the point of view of the political history of the Vedic Indians. Still another phase of the relationship between these two mythological currents is marked by a spirit of compromise. It must be remembered that, even among the Vedic Indians, there were some tribes who continued to adhere to the Varuṇa-religion. They must have, however, seen the signs of the changing times. Instead of either giving up the Varuṇa-religion altogether or dogmatically sticking to it in the face of the generally prevailing Indra-religion, they, very wisely, tried to bring about an honourable compromise between the two religions. They argued that, after victory is won by the war-god, Indra, Varuṇa is needed to establish law and order. 'Indra *conquers* and Varuṇa *rules*' — this was their slogan (VII. 83.9). Such attempts at a religious compro-

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[1] According to HILLEBRANDT, *ṚV* IV. 42 contains only a sharp definition of the provinces of the two divinities. There is no suggestion of transfer of power from Varuṇa to Indra. It may, however, be asked: if it was merely a sharp definition of the provinces of the two divinities, why should Varuṇa try so much to assert his claim? On the other hand, in view of the warlike character of the Vedic Indians, the supersession of a cosmic god by a war-god would be quite logical.

[2] *op. cit.*

[3] In the Śunaḥśepa legend in the *Ait. Br.* (VII. 13-17), Indra is represented as approaching Rohita, in the disguise of a *puruṣa*, and dissuading him from going back to his father, Hariścandra, who wanted to sacrifice him to Varuṇa. Indra's interference in this connection is entirely fortuitous and may only be reminiscent of the ancient rivalry between him and Varuṇa. Indra perhaps did not want that a sacrifice should be performed in honour of his rival, Varuṇa. It is also possible that Indra, as the guardian of 'imperium', wanted to prevent the immolation of a promising young representative of the *kṣatra*.

mise seem to have been made particularly by the Vāsiṣṭhas (VII. 82.2,5, 6; 84.2,4; 85.3).

For our present purpose we are concerned more particularly with the supersession of the Asura-religion by the Indra-religion.[1] This supersession must have had inevitable repurcussions on the relations between the Vedic religion on the one hand and the Iranian religion on the other. The separation between the two branches of the Aryan stock — namely, the Vedic Indians and the ancient Iranians was, as shown above, the result of normal historical migrations. These latter, however, it must be remembered, were governed by temperamental differences among those people. The cultural contacts between these two branches, it may be presumed, continued even after their separation. The Ahura-Mazdah-religion of the Iranian Aryans was closely akin to the Asura-Varuṇa-religion of the Vedic Aryans, for, both of them had been developed out of a common religious ideology of their Aryan ancestors. The rivalry between the Asura-Varuṇa-religion and the Indra-religion, which is an outstanding event in the religious history of the Vedic Indians, could not, therefore, have failed to influence the ancient Iranian religion as well. As was to be expected, among the war-like Vedic Indians, Indra superseded Asura Varuṇa. The ancient Iranians, on the other hand, were essentially peaceable and ethically inclined people. Nothing seems to have happened in their history to loosen the strong hold which the cosmic law-giver, Asura, had on their minds. The Ahura-religion, therefore, continued to prevail unchallenged among them. As against this, they regarded the Vedic Indian Indra-religion as more or less upstartish. The Soma-drinking war-god of the Veda did not suit their way of life and thought. Not only this, the Vedic Indra, with all his virtues and weaknesses, must have become definitely reprehensible in the eyes of the die-hards among them. The most natural result of this attitude of theirs was that they came to regard Indra as not only undivine but positively demoniac. The fact that such an unworthy figure should have elsewhere eclipsed the noble Asura must have lent greater poignancy to the attitude of some Iranian mythologists. In a late phase of their mythology, therefore, they represented Indra as Andra, the third worst devil[1].

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[1] In the *ṚV*, the epithet *asura* is sometimes attributed also to Indra. But it was so attributed only when that epithet lost its original significance (*cf.* DANDEKAR, '*Asura* Varuṇa', *ABORI* XXI, 157-91) and came to be used in a more or less conventional sense, namely, 'the powerful one'. It thus became almost a courtesy-title conferred on all mighty gods.

The religious conflict between Indra and Asura Varuṇa may have gained a peculiar significance from the political point of view as well. Under the victorious leadership of their war-god, Indra, the Vedic Indians conquered several antagonistic tribes who resisted their onward march. As indicated above, these foes of the Vedic Indians are referred to, in the *ṚV*, under the general name, Dāsas[2]. It is, however, possible to derive from the *ṚV*, more specific historical details at least in some respects. One of the epithets exclusively attributed to Indra, in the *ṚV*, is *purandara*. By way of explaining the significance of this epithet, I had put forth[1] the following hypothesis. In the course of their onward march into India, the Vedic Aryans must have come across a people who lived in fortified settlements (*puraḥ*). The civilisation of this people, which was characterisd by *pur* (= fortified settlement), must have become conspicuous in the eyes of the Vedic Indians on account of its sharp contrast with their nomadic tribal life. These *puraḥ*, it may be presumed, represented the last phase of the great Indus Valley civilisation, particularly that aspect of it, which had developed in the region of Harappa. These Harappa people seem to have stubbornly resisted the progress of the Vedic Indians. Their fortified settlements must have certainly stood them in good stead — at least to a certain extent. But, after all, their opposition was but the last gasp of a people with a more or less exhausted civilisation. Indra, the national hero of the Vedic Indians, seems to have shattered their many *puraḥ* (I. 51.5 ; II. 14.6 ; 19.6 ; VIII. 17.14) and ultimately vanquished them. The connection between the Indus Valley civilisation and the Vedic civilisation can thus be historically explained. To *purandara* Indra belongs the credit of having finally brought to an end the ancient Indus civilisation, which was already on its last legs, and of having established, in its place, the Vedic civilisation, which was infused with new life and vigour[2]. As is well known, the Indus civilisation exhibits several affinities with the Assyrian civilisation. It may be presumed that the Aryans had already become familiar, directly or indirectly, with the civilisation of the Assyrians. When, therefore, the descendants of those Aryans, namely, the Vedic Indians, encountered a civilisation which showed affinities with the civilisation of the Assyrians, namely, the Indus civilisation, they must have straightway connected the latter with the civilisation of the Assyrians or the Asura people. They must have thus found the counterpart of the religious conflict between Indra and Asura Varuṇa also in the political sphere, namely, in the form of the conflict between the Indra-people and the Asura-people, that is to say, between the Vedic Indians on the one hand and the Indus people, who were culturally akin to the Assyrians or the Asura-people, on the other.[1]

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[1] The representation of Indra as a demon in ancient Iranian literature has proved a knotty problem in comparative mythology. This curious mythological phenomenon has been accounted for in several ways. Martin HAUG, for instance, suggested that it was the result of a conflict between the Asura-religion and the Deva-religion, which arose among the Indo-Iranians. Some other scholars attributed Indra's demonhood to his immoderate indulgence in the intoxicating beverage, Soma, which trait of his character must have been found to be revolting against the essentially moral tone of Zoroaster's religious reform. Still other scholars see in the demon Andra of the *Vendidad* the reflection not of the Vedic Indra but of the less reputable Indra of the *Purāṇas*. GRAY (*Iran. Rel.*), who regarded Indra as primarily a rain-god, believed that, in India, Indra brought the beneficent rains of the monsoons, while, in Iran, he is associated with the malaria-bringing heavy rains of winter. This would explain, according to him, why, in the Iranian mythology, Indra is looked upon as a malevolent power. Still another view is that Indra's original nature as a fertility-god must have gone against the grain of the sophisticated Ahura-religion. CHATTOPADHYAYA considers (*Proc. IV AIOC*, 11-24) Indra's demonhood to have been the result of an individual poet's fancy. He refers, in this connection, to the fact that Milton filled Satan's camp with the gods of the people neighbouring the land of Israel.

According to M. A. SHUSTERY (*Proc. III AIOC*, 109-112), Indra has Rustam for his counterpart in Persia. There are several points of similarity between the two. The fact that the *Avesta* is silent about Rustam is explained by SHUSTERY by presuming that Rustam was the hero of the ancient Iranian mythology but was not accepted as such by the new religion of Zoroaster. H. GÜNTERT (*Der arische Weltkönig*, 57 ff.) has pointed out that Mithra in the later *Avesta* has inherited certain popular traits in Indra's character. B. GEIGER, for instance, notes (*SAW Wien* 1916, 176, 7, 74) the similarity between Indra's *vajra* and Mithra's *vazra*. A. EGGERS (*Der arische Gott Mitra*, 40 ff.), on the other hand, thinks — curiously enough — that it was Indra who inherited the warlike features in Mithra's character.

[2] The word *vṛtra* normally denotes an enemy in general — whether he be Ārya or Dāsa.

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[1] DANDEKAR. '*Asura* Varuṇa', *ABORI* XXI, 190.

[2] DANDEKAR. 'The Antecedents and the Early Beginnings of the Vedic Period'. *PIHC* X, 1947, 24–55. This hypothesis gets confirmation from the archaeological excavations recently carried out at Harappa. *cf.* R. E. M. WHEELER. 'Harappā 1946 : The Defences and Cemetery R. 37'. *Ancient India* 3, pp. 58–130. The identification of the Dasyus and the Dāsas - of dark skin and flat noses and possessing cities - with the inhabitants of Harappā and Mohenjodaro, who had, among them, a large proportion of proto-Australoids, is, according to PIGGOTT (*Prehistoric India*, 261), almost certain. According to KOSAMBI ('Origin of Brahmin Gotras', *JBBRAS* 26, p. 49), the myth of Indra killing a demon to free the pent-up waters is to be understood in the sense of Indra's having shattered the river-dams constructed by the Indus people. Tremendous prehistoric dams of this sort still exist a little to the West of Mohenjodaro. But releasing of waters by Indra was a source of joy to the people. This point does not seem to fit in well with KOSAMBI'S suggestion.

The philological consideration of the name Indra would fully confirm the basic heroic character of the god Indra. It should be remembered that Indra is a specifically Indian name, and that, in no other Indo-European languages, except the ancient Iranian[2] and the Mitannian,[3] is its cognate form evidenced. A reference has already been made to some of the attempts made by scholars to give the derivation of the word, *Indra*.[4] It has also been pointed out that none of these attempts appears to be convincing.[1] From among other attempts, in this connection, a mention may be made of that of JACOBI. JACOBI connects[2] the word, *indra,* philologically with _*ənro_ (Sanskrit *nar*) and thus emphasizes the essentially manly, virile character of Indra. According to BEZZENBERGER[3] the words, Vedic *indra*, av. *andra*, peh. *andar*, ags. *ent,* are philologically cognate words and must have originally denoted something like a 'giant'. This view of BEZZENBERGER's seems to have been found acceptable by HILLEBRANDT.[4] KRETSCHMER and BENVENISTE suggest that the Hittite word, *innar,* denoting 'might,' is at the basis of the word, *indra.* Accepting this suggestion, Batakrishna GHOSH says[5] that the name of the Vedic god, Indra, is but a thematized form of the Hittite word, *innar.* There is no doubt that the words, *indra* and *innar,* are closely related to each other from the philological point of view. But to assume on that account, as KRETSCHMER has done, that the concept of the Vedic god, Indra, is of Hittite origin is demonstrably wrong[6]. It should, however, be

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[1] It is interesting to note, in this connection, that, in the *Avesta*, the word *daeva* (*deva*) (Vid. X. 9; XIX. 43) — opposed to *ahura* denoting the mighty god — came to mean a ' demon '. As against this, in later Sanskrit, the word *asura* — as opposed to *deva* (Indra)-came to be used in the sense of a ' demon '. It must be pointed out that *asura* is the original word, while the word, *sura*, used, in later Sanskrit, in the sense of ' god ', is artificially formed by regarding the *a* in *asura* as a negative termination.

[2] *cf. andra* (Vid. X. 9; XIX. 43). How this Indian god came to be introduced in the *Avesta* has already been explained above.

[3] *cf. in-tar* and *in-da-ra* or *inaras* on the Boghazkŏi tablet. For the explanation of the mention of this Indian god in connection with the treaty between the King of the Hittites and the King of Mitanni, cir. 1400 B. C., see DANDEKAR, *PIHC* X, 1947, pp. 24-55.

[4] From the root *idh-indh* (ROTH, *ZDMG* 1847, 72 ff.; BERGAIGNE, II. 166; GRASSMANN and BOLLENSEN, *ZDMG* XLI, 505). From the root *in-inv* (ROTH; WEBER, *Rāj.* 31 fn. 3). From the root *syand* (BENFEY). *indra-indu* (MAX MÜLLER, MACDONELL, *VM* 66). See also V. M. APTE. ' The Name: ' Indra ' — an Etymological Investigation '. *J Bom U* XIX (N. S.) 2, 13-18. APTE derives the word from *indh* or *ind* (= to be glorious or bright, to kindle, to blaze). According to him, this derivation was present even to the minds of the Vedic poets. Incidentally it may be added that APTE seems to regard Indra as the Sun in the Arctic region.

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[1] Yāska gives (*Nir.* X. 8) as many as thirteen different derivations of the name, Indra.

[2] *KZ* XXXI, 316 ff.

[3] *BB* I, 342.

[4] *KLbl.* II, 3.

[5] *IC* XV, 146-158.

[6] *cf.* P. KRETSCHMER. 'Zum Ursprung des Gottes Indra'. *Anz. W. Ak.* LXIV, 39; 'Indra und der hethitische Gott Inaras'. *Kl. F.* I, 297. CHARPENTIER. 'Indra'. *MO* 25. DANDEKAR. *PIHC* X, pp. 24-55. One of the four gods invoked as witnesses to the treaty between the King of the Hittites and the King of Mitanni, documented on the Boghazkōi tablet, is Inaras. What can be the relation between this god and the Vedic Indra? It has been suggested by scholars like JACOBI ('On the Antiquity of Vedic Culture'. *JRAS* 1909, 721-26) and WINTERNITZ (*Hist. of Ind. Lit.* I, 306) that, in view of the close resemblance of the four gods mentioned on the Boghazkōi tablet with the Vedic gods, Mitra, Varuṇa, Indra, and Nāsatyau, the Mitannians may be justifiably regarded as an offshoot from among the Vedic Indians migrating to South-West Asia. According to these scholars, therefore, Inaras is just the Mitannian form of the Vedic Indra. Such an assumption would, however, give rise to certain difficulties from the linguistic and culture-historical points of view (*vide* DANDEKAR. 'Antecedents etc'. *PIHC* X, 24-55). A more satisfactory hypothesis in this connection may be proposed as follows: The Mitannians, like the Kassites, originally belonged to those IE tribes who migrated from their primary *Urheimat* in the Ural-Altaic region to Bactria. In view of their later history, these tribes may be

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noted that the etymological attempts mentioned above, namely, those of JACOBI, BEZZENBERGER, KRETSCHMER, and BENVENISTE, though not quite acceptable, rightly emphasize the fact that the name, Indra, is essentially suggestive of 'manliness' and 'might'. By far the most convincing etymology of the word, so far put forth, appears to be the one given by GÜNTERT.[1] GÜNTERT derives the word, *indra*, from the idg. **oid* (= to swell) and gives quite a plausible explanation of *n* and *r* found in that word.[2] The name, Indra, thus emphasizes the 'swelling, manly virility' of the hero. That the words, *indra* and *indu*, are closely related to each other from

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called the proto-Aryans. While living together in that region the proto-Aryans, that is to say, the ancestors of, among others, the Mitannians, the Kassites, and the Aryans (= the Indo-Iranians, or the ancestors of the ancient Iranians and the Vedic Indians), must have developed their own peculiar language and religion. In the earlier part of the proto-Aryan period, the Kassites and the Mitannians seem to have further migrated from their proto-Aryan *Urheimat* in Bactria to SW Asia leaving their Aryan brethren behind. They must have naturally taken with them the language and religion which the proto-Aryans had already evolved. These language and religion must be regarded as the forerunners also of the Aryan language and religion — and so of the languages and religions represented in the *Avesta* and the Veda. This would account for the similarity between the Boghazköi gods and the Vedic gods. It has been shown above that Indra was a god of specifically Vedic Indian origin. The question would, therefore, naturally arise: How then could god Inaras occur in the Mitannian religion? This can be explained in the following manner. The Mitannian word, *Inaras*, and the Vedic word, *Indra*, which are, without doubt, linguistically connected with each other, must be traced back to a common proto-Aryan word, which must have meant 'a hero with swelling manly power'. As indicated above, the Mitannians migrated from the proto-Aryan *Urheimat* in Bactria before the Aryans did. On their way to and in SW Asia, it is likely that they had to encounter some opposition which they ultimately overcame under the behest of one of their heroic leaders. In course of time, the Mitannians seem to have given their leader the appropriate name, Inaras. Inaras was later on deified and thus secured a place in the pantheon of the Mitannian gods. The originals of the mythological concepts of Inaras and Indra — namely, the heroic leaders of the Mitannians and the Vedic Indians respectively — were quite distinct from each other. It would, therefore, not be quite accurate to regard Inaras as the Mitannian counterpart of the Vedic Indra.

[1] *Der arische Weltkönig und Heiland*, 1923, pp. 13-14.

[2] Ludwig may not be far from right in connecting *indra* with Slav. *jędru* (= impetuous).

the philological point of view seems to have been recognised from very early times. It must, however, be pointed out that, in that case, the word, *indu*, does not denote 'drop' of Soma or rain-water, as suggested by earlier scholars, but of the *semen virile.*[1] The words, *vṛṣā*, *vṛṣabha*, which are very often used in connection with the Vedic Indra, would thus be semasiologically very close to the name, Indra. The Vedic god, Indra, must, therefore, have originally been a human hero, who, possessing great virile power, led his Aryan followers from victory to victory in the numerous battles in which the latter must have been engaged by their many foes. Indeed no better and more appropriate name could have been thought of for the war-like leader of the Vedic Indians.

Originally a historical hero from among the Vedic Aryans, who was, in course of time, transformed by the Vedic poets first into an 'institutionalised' national hero and then into the national war-god of the Vedic Indians, and who, in consonance with the war-like way of life and thought of the Vedic Indians, came to be finally regarded as the supreme god of the Vedic pantheon — this is the evolution of Indra's personality which we have traced so far.[2]

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[1] With this etymology, the interesting *vṛṣākapi-sūkta* (X. 86) would seem to acquire a peculiar significance.

[2] In his book, *The Hero* (A Study in Tradition, Myth, and Drama), London, 1949, Lord RAGLAN has made some thought-provoking observations on the subject of 'Hero in mythology and history'. Without attempting a detailed examination of RAGLAN'S observations, it may be pointed out that those observations, though very suggestive, appear to be clearly onesided. According to RAGLAN, there is no justification for believing that mythological heroes were originally historical persons or that any of the stories of their exploits had any historical foundation. He says that the world of tradition is quite a different one from that of history. He further points out that the stories of heroes in several mythologies in the world follow a specific pattern, which is characterised by 22 points (pp. 178-79), and that this pattern strongly suggests a ritual pattern rather than a historically authentic account. Out of these 22 points at the most four points can be found in the story of the Vedic Indra. Therefore, even accepting RAGLAN'S analysis of the 'Hero' (which is by no means either complete or entirely convincing), the Vedic Indra cannot be regarded merely as a traditional hero without any historical character. It may be pointed out, in this connection, that it is certainly not claimed that the entire Indra-mythology is authentic history; all that is claimed is that there unmistakably exist, in

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But the 'growth' or the 'becoming' of the Vedic Indra did not stop here. There were some other currents which were, in course of time, merged into the mythology relating to that god. One of the most natural consequences of the elevation of a human hero to the position of a god—particularly to the position of the supreme god of the pantheon, as in the case of Indra—was to make him responsible for some mighty cosmic deeds. As a matter of fact, it is the association with such cosmic deeds that truly testifies to the godhead of a god. This is indeed one of the ways in which history is transformed into mythology. The further evolution of Indra's personality also is, as will be seen, the result of this process of mythological development. Indra, who was primarily and essentially the national war-god of the Vedic Indians, accordingly came to be connected with some cosmic phenomena. In this matter, the Vedic poets seem to have proceeded more or less on strictly logical lines. A vanquisher of human

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(*continued from the previous page*)

that mythology, some historical elements. Even RAGLAN seems to admit (pp. 148, 151) that mythology does tend to reflect, to a certain extent political and economic conditions. Speaking of the basis of history, RAGLAN enumerates five classes of historical materials. Among these he includes contemporary records. As suggested elsewhere in this paper, it may be claimed that the Veda is, in a sense, a record of contemporary historical events. To the question posed by RAGLAN, with a view to ascertaining the historicity of a hero, namely: do we have any contemporary record of the hero's existence?, the answer, so far as Indra is concerned, is in the affirmative. Further, it is a common experience, particularly in India, that a historically authentic hero has, in course of time, several mythical elements superimposed upon his character, even when that hero has nothing to do with ritual. Several instances can be quoted, which would falsify the author's statement that no progressive monarch has been deified (p. 204). It is also unwarranted to say that all myths are narratives connected with ritual (p. 144). To prove that no figure in mythology can have a historical character, RAGLAN suggests (p. 6) that the savage has no interest in the past and that, even if he had, there was no means of having that interest gratified. But ancient literature contains unmistakable indications that the ancient people did have an absorbing interest in tribal history and that they manifested it in the form of tribal songs. RAGLAN'S observations about 'Hero' cannot, therefore, be said to affect the original historicity of Indra's personality. All that one can say is that there did exist what may be called a universal hero-myth, which was connected with a ritual and that, as will be shown later, some elements of this universal hero-myth came to be superimposed upon the Indra-mythology in the course of its evolution.

foes could as well be regarded as a vanquisher of cosmic foes. The Vedic poets had, therefore, to think of some cosmic wars, which would correspond with the fierce battles which the heroic Indra had actually fought for his Vedic Aryan followers. And the phenomenon of nature, which exhibited many features of actual warfare, such as, the fierceness and horror, the wrath and tumult, the ruthless uprooting of the one and the animated elation of the other, was certainly that of thunderstorm, lightning, and rain. The Vedic poets, therefore, made Indra the central figure — the hero — of this cosmic drama.[1] It is, however, not unlikely that the Vedic poets themselves were conscious of the various discrepancies — mythological and poetical — which would result from such more or less artificial development of Indra's personality.[2] But such discrepancies, they must have argued, were inevitable in the normal process of mythological development.[3] In the process of transforming the heroic Indra into a rain-god, the Vedic poets must have experienced one great difficulty. The Vedic pantheon already contained one rain-god, namely, Trita Āptya, whom the Vedic Indians had inherited from their Aryan ancestors. The question must have, therefore, arisen as to how to accommodate these two mythical concepts — the one of the ancient rain-god, Trita Āptya, and the other of the new rain-god, Indra. The answer to this question, however, was quite simple. Indra, who had already become the foremost among the gods of the Vedic Indians, when transformed into a rain-god, must naturally supersede the original Aryan rain-god. As indicated in the earlier part of this paper, the Vedic poets seem to have made purposeful efforts in this direction. Though a stray passage in the *ṚV* suggests that Indra took over the rôle of the rain-god from Trita (I. 52.5), it becomes clear that the Vedic poets have consciously attempted to obliterate the latter from memory. It is only by assuming the superimposition on Indra — at a later stage in the evolution of his personality, and for the reasons detailed above — of the character of a rain-god that the relations between Trita Āptya and Indra, as presented in the *ṚV* directly or indirectly, can become adequately understandable.[1]

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[1] Apart from the fact that the phenomenon of thunderstorm represents
1 the closest cosmic counterpart of an actual battle, there may have been
some other reasons as well, which prevailed upon the Vedic poets while
transforming the warlike Indra into a rain-god. Victory in battles, under
the leadership of Indra, often opened up, for the Vedic Indians, new avenues
of a richer and fuller life. Perhaps the most common blessing, which the Vedic
Indians longed for in this new phase of their cultural life — which,
incidentally, must have become less warlike and more settled in character —
2 was properly-timed and plentiful rain. Such rain, again, was perhaps the
only concrete bounty, which the Vedic poets could think of as resulting
3 from the cosmic battles. The evolution of a war-god particularly into a rain-god would become fairly understandable if looked at from this point of view. Moreover the most concrete cosmic form of *vṛtra* or resistance, which Vṛtrahā Indra overcame, is the cloud, for, it is the cloud, which resists the free flow of the much longed-for rains. It is also likely that, in the new conditions of life of the Vedic people, the philological connection between the words, *indra* and *indu*, was perhaps given a significance different from the original one, and Indra then came to be associated with rain-drops. Another factor, which must have made the Vedic poets think of the phenomenon of waters, while superimposing a cosmic character on Indra's personality, was the merger into the Indra-mythology, at this stage, of yet another mythical current, namely, the one connected with the universal myth of the hero and the dragon.

[2] Attention has already been drawn to some of these discrepancies while critically examining the rain-god-theory about the Indra-mythology.

[3] In the present case, it is indeed these discrepancies which have served as the starting point for a critical analysis of the Indra-mythology.

Side by side with this superimposition on Indra's personality of the character of a rain-god, which represents the last phase in the process of the 'becoming' of Indra,[1] there occurred the merger of another mythological current into the Indra-mythology. A comparative study of the ancient mythologies of the world would show that most of them have one myth in common, namely, the myth relating to the contest between the hero and the dragon.[2] The significance of this universal myth is quite obvious. It should, however, be remembered in this connection that only the general basic skeleton of this myth is adopted by the various ancient mythologies, the details put into it being different in different cases. In other words, we find the concepts of 'Hero' and 'Dragon' in almost all ancient mythologies, but these concepts do not necessarily have the same contents everywhere.[3] The ancient Aryans also adapted — of course in their own peculiar manner–this myth of the hero and the dragon in the general scheme of their mythological thought. Indeed the Vedic Aryans must have found the adaptation of this myth particularly easy. In their new mythology, they had already deified the historical hero, Indra. The most natural thing for them to do, therefore, was to identify the hero of the ancient dragon-myth with that historical hero. Indra's principal enemies, both human and cosmic, accordingly came to be known by the name, Ahi (dragon), and several new elements, derived from the ancient dragon-myth, came to be introduced into the Indra-mythology[1]. So far as the *ṚV* is concerned, with the identification of Indra with the hero of the ancient dragon-myth, the growth of the personality of Indra may be said to have come to an end.

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[1] As pointed out by OLDENBERG (*Rel. d. Veda*, 143), Indra is the rain-god also in Pali literature. This is quite understandable. The superimposition of the character of a rain-god on Indra's original personality represents the last phase in the growth of Indra. It is, therefore, natural that this last phase should have been mainly adopted in later literature. It may, however, be mentioned in this connection that in Pali the word, *vṛtra*, seems to have disappeared altogether (HILLEBRANDT. *VM* III, 195). For, he is not mentioned as the rival of Sakka, who has been transformed into *devānaṁ indo*. As regards Sakka, Professor and Mrs. RHYS DAVIDS held the view that Sakka and Indra are quite different conceptions. Charles GODAGE (*Ceylon Univ. Rev.* III), however, believes that the Buddhist conception of Sakka is a historical growth out of the epithet, Śakra, which is exclusively attributed to the Vedic Indra. Buddhist Sakka is a development of the Vedic Indra with the pronounced emphasis on the moral side of his nature. According to GODAGE, we can understand how the savage infuriated Vṛtra-slayer of Veda came to be the exponent of ethics of mildness and non-violence, and a master in the art of self-command.

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[1] The naturalistic elements in Indra's personality are, as indicated above, derived mainly from the phenomenon of thunder-storm and rain. The growth of a war-god into a rain-god must indeed be considered to have been the result of the specific attempts made by the Vedic poets to superimpose a cosmic character on the heroic Indra. Apart from this, however, in the normal development of Vedic mythology as a whole, there was a stage, which was characterised by what may be called the 'solarisation' of several Vedic gods (*cf.* DANDEKAR. 'Viṣṇu in the Veda'. *Kane Comm. Vol.*, 95-111; 'Pūṣan, the Pastoral God of the Veda'. *NIA* V, 49-66). Certain naturalistic elements in Indra's personality, which are vaguely reminiscent of the sun-god (not, of course, in the sense in which HILLEBRANDT understands it, namely, the sun-god, who vanquishes the winter-demon, but rather in the sense in which MAX MÜLLER understands it, namely, the sun-god, who daily overcomes the demon of darkness) must have been due to this solarising tendency.

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[2] The various forms which this universal hero-dragon-myth has taken in different ancient mythologies are: Zeus and Typhon, Hercules and the Hydra, Apollo and Python, Thor and the Serpent, Marduk and Tiamat, Gilgameš and Humbaba, Innara and the Dragon, Thrætaona and Azi Dahāka. See also: RAGLAN, *The Hero*, London 1949, pp. 177-189.

[3] Even when this myth is interpreted from the naturalistic point of view, the phenomenon of nature, which it is made to represent, is not always the same. However, as was quite natural, the dragon was normally associated with waters.

Before closing the history of the evolution of the personality and character of the Vedic Indra, a reference may usefully be made to his associations with some other gods. It has already been pointed out that Indra is very closely associated with the Maruts—indeed, so much so that Indra is called *marutvān* and the Maruts are referred to as *indrajyeṣṭhāḥ*. How did this association come about and what exactly is its significance ? In order to be able to answer this question, it would be necessary to trace—albeit briefly—the evolution of the Marut-mythology. In the Ṛgvedic mythology, the Maruts are associated mainly with two gods, namely, Rudra and Indra. Just as the Maruts are designated as *indra-jyeṣṭhāḥ* — the followers of Indra, they are also called *rudriya*—the children of Rudra. How can these two concepts be correlated with each other? It is neither possible nor necessary in the present context to go into the details of this entire problem. The following hypothesis may, however, be put forth as the only one, which would satisfactorily explain the various aspects of the mythology relating to the Maruts. Rudra seems originally to have been the god of death in the *ṚV*[1] and the Maruts belonged originally to the paraphernalia of that god. Etymologically the word, *marut*, may be derived from the root *mar* (= to die). It would seem likely that primarily the Maruts were the personifications of the souls of the dead[2] and secondarily the messengers of the god of death. As the messengers of death, the Maruts seem to have formed a uniform, well-disciplined, homogeneous group. It has been pointed out, in another context[3], that, in the course of the development of Vedic mythology, Rudra gradually lost his character as god of death and was soon superseded by Yama, who, incidentally, was not originally the god of death. Not only this, but, for this and several other reasons, Rudra seems to have also been soon reduced to quite a subordinate status in the official Vedic religion. This must have inevitably resulted in the breaking up of the original connection between Rudra and the Maruts—even the few references to that connection, which have been preserved in the *ṚV*, becoming gradually less understandable. The Vedic poets consequently gave to the mythological concept of the Maruts quite a new significance. In doing so, they emphasized a specific feature of their original character, namely, that they formed a uniform and well-disciplined group. The Maruts are like brothers, among whom none is the eldest or the youngest (V. 59.6; 60.5). They are equal in age (I. 165.1) and are of one mind (VIII. 20.1, 21). They also look alike with their golden mantles (V. 55.6), golden helmets (V. 54.11), and armlets (II. 34.2). They always move about in fixed formations-thrice sixty (VIII. 85.8), or thrice seven (I. 133.6). These peculiarities of the Maruts must have presented to the mind of the Vedic poet the picture of the formations of well-disciplined soldiers in their uniform. When, therefore, the memories of the original character of the Maruts were being gradually obliterated, the Vedic poets must have naturally thought of associating them newly with their war-god, Indra. That the connection between the Maruts and Rudra represents a prior phase of the Marut-mythology is clearly indicated by the fewer and more or less vague references in the *ṚV* to that connection.[1] On the other hand, the references to the association between Indra and the Maruts are many and quite distinct. Moreover, the transference of the Maruts from Rudra to Indra would appear more logical. That Maruts could have been transferred from a prominent god, like Indra, to Rudra, who had already been reduced to a subordinate position in the *ṚV*, is indeed inconceivable.[2] As mentioned elsewhere, the Maruts are represented as increasing the strength and prowess of Indra (III. 35.9; VI. 17.11). They generally assisted him in the battles (III. 47.3-4; VIII. 65.2-3; X. 113.3).[3] Attention has already been drawn to a couple of passages in the *ṚV*, which seem to show that some features of the mythological connection between Indra and the Maruts may have been the reflections of the actual historical connections between a war-lord and his lieutenants. In I.165.6 and VIII. 7.31, the Maruts are described as having left their leader, Indra, in the lurch. Elsewhere (I. 170.2; 171.6) there is a clear reference to the serious differences between Indra and the Maruts. It should, however, be remembered that such incidents must have been but rare, and that they perhaps only help to confirm the historicity of Indra's original personality.

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[1] E. SIECKE (*Indra's Drachenkampf*, 1905) traces the Indra-Ahi-contest back to lunar origins. His theory, however, appears to be quite farfetched. According to R. S. OJHA (*JBORS* 28, 55-64), this myth, which is found in India, Babylonia, Greece, Egypt, Persia etc., reflects the historical conflict between the serpent-worshipping people, who had spread from the mediterranean coasts to the Indian plains, and the non-serpent-worshipping people like the Aryans. A. P. KARMARKAR (*NIA* 5, 184-189) believes that the Mohenjodaro seals indicate the prevalence of the Nāga-cult in those hoary times and that the Indra-Vṛtra-fight is symbolical of the Ārya-Nāga-fight. Discussing the "Vedic *Krivi*", K. RÖNNOW (*AO* XVI, 161-180) says that the religious history of the *ṚV* contains, among other themes, the one which refers to the tension between the Deva and Asura-cults of the immigrant Aryans and the Nāga-cults of the native peoples. This, according to that scholar, is represented through the conflict between Indra and Vṛtra-Ahi. He further suggests that, later on, many Aryan or semi-Aryan tribes joined the serpent-cult, but the tribes worshipping Indra never compromised (*vide* also foot-notes 58, 69 and 76). These and similar other views are not improbable, but they would require more confirmatory evidence. In any case it seems certain that the elements of the ancient myth relating to the hero and the dragon were first superimposed on the Indra-mythology, and the resulting mythical Indra-Ahi-conflict may then have been consolidated through its historical counterpart in the form of the Ārya-Nāga-conflict. (In this context, reference may also be made to : A. BANERJI-SASTRI. "The Nāgas ". *ABORI* 18, 338-50 ; K. K. GUPTA. " The Nāgas and the Nāga Cult in Ancient Indian History ". *PIHC* III. ; E. von EICKSTEDT. " Arier und Nāgas ". *Hirt Comm. Vol.* 1936 ; M. GHOSH. " Serpent-Worship in Ancient India " *PAIOC* VII.)

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[1] DANDEKAR. "Rudra". *Summary,* AIOC XII, Benares 1943-44.

[2] As suggested by KUHN and BENFEY (*OO. on ṚV* I. 64), with whom MEYER (*Idg. Mythen* I, 218) and SCHROEDER (*WZKM* 9, 248-9) agree.

[3] DANDEKAR. "Yama in the Veda". *B. C. Law Comm. Vol.* I, 194-209.

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[1] Attention may be drawn, in this context, to the very significant observations made by L. D. BARNETT (" The Genius : A Study in Indo-European Psychology ". *JRAS* 1929, 731-748). According to that scholar, the striking fact that just the Maruts have some serpent-attributes (which do not belong to any other gods in the *ṚV*), such as *ahibhānu* (I. 172.1), *ahimanyu* (I. 64.8, 9), *ahiśuṣma* (V. 33.5), would indicate that, in the Vedic religious tradition, there was some old connection between the Maruts and the serpents. It would also seem to confirm the original connection between the Maruts and Rudra. (The later connection between Rudra-Śiva and the serpents is well-known). BARNETT further points out that the Maruts of the *ṚV* are in origin a host of genii, whose primary duty is the guardianship of the Aryan and his family. The ordinary man, the ranker in the Aryan armies, saw in the Maruts the celestial counterpart of himself. (BARNETT emphasizes the parallelism between the Maruts and the Fravaši of the *Avesta*). In his *Der arische Mannerbund* (Lund 1938), Stig WIKANDER has expressed some interesting views on this subject. WIKANDER tries to prove that the Vedic word, *marya*, signified not merely a lusty young man but a member of a particular society vowed to a particular cult. The *maryas* were indeed the earthly counterparts of the Maruts in heaven. According to that scholar, the two words, *marya* and *marut*, are etymologically connected with each other.

[2] That the Maruts could have been associated with Rudra and Indra simultaneously is equally inconceivable.

[3] The Maruts are sometimes described also as the singers of the battle-songs (I. 19.4).

When in the course of the development of the Vedic mythology, a cosmic character came to be superimposed upon the personality of the national war-god, Indra, and when Indra was consequently transformed into a rain-god, a corresponding transformation occurred in the character of the Maruts also. The trusted lieutenants of the war-lord now became the allies of the rain-god. In other words, the Maruts came to be regarded as the divinities connected with storm. This is the final phase in the evolution of the character of the Maruts as presented in the *ṚV*, and that is why, in later mythology, the Maruts are usually represented as storm-gods.[1]

Another god, with whom Indra is associated in the *ṚV*, is Bṛhaspati-Brahmaṇaspati (II. 23.18; 24.2; IV. 49. 1-6; VIII. 85.15.). A critical study of the Ṛgvedic hymns, which celebrate Brahmaṇaspati would clearly show that that god is obviously a conscious priestly creation. Without going into the details of this question, it may be pointed out that, through this god, the priestly community must have originally thought of glorifying the magic power of prayer. The word, *brahman* (in Brahmaṇaspati), must be understood in the sense of the ' magic power of prayer '. As indicated above, on account of their warlike way of life and thought, the Vedic Aryans transformed Indra, their victorious warrior-leader, into the supreme god of the Vedic pantheon. At that time, it must have been the anxiety of the Vedic poets and priests—an anxiety which is indeed quite understandable—to impress generally upon the people that it was not merely the valour of the warriors, blessed by the national war-god, Indra, which helped them towards victory. In order to be truly effective that valour has to be necessarily aided by the magic power of prayer. This anxiety, on the part of the Vedic poets and priests, may be said to have been mythologically expressed through the creation of Brahmaṇaspati. In this context, attention may be drawn to the very significant fact that Brahmaṇaspati, like Indra, is a god of specifically Indian origin. The Vedic poets have consciously set this god by the side of Indra and have represented him as having been responsible—together with Indra — for the victorious battles against the enemies (II. 23.18 ; IV. 49. 1-6). Sometimes this anxiety to place the magic power of prayer on par with warlike valour seems to have got the better of the Vedic poets. As the result of this, in some passages, Brahmaṇaspati alone is credited, by the Vedic poets, with having accomplished the heroic deeds which are normally—and, of course, more naturally—attributed to Indra (I. 40.8 ; II. 23.11 ; 24.2 ; VI. 73. 1-2 ; X. 67.5 ; 103.4). Some of Indra's exclusive epithets also have been applied to Brahmaṇaspati—such as, for instance, *maghavan* (II. 24.12) and *vajrin* (I. 40.8)[1]. The obvious incongruity between the basic character of Brahmaṇaspati, as clearly indicated by his name, and the generally warlike traits, which are sometimes attributed to him, can thus be rationally accounted for.[2]

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[1] It is interesting to note that the Vedic god, Vāyu, is rarely connected with the Maruts. He is only once referred to as having created the Maruts from the wombs of the heaven (I. 134.4). Had the naturalistic character of the Maruts been primary, there would have occurred more frequent references to the association between Vāyu-Vāta and the Maruts. See, in this connection: Stig WIKANDER. *Vayu.* Uppsala 1941. WIKANDER says that, in the rites, myths, and speculations relating to Vāyu-Vāta, we have clear traces of an old religion which must have played an important rôle in the common Indo-Iranian period. According to him, Vāyu-Vāta was not merely a god of wind but also of 'breathing' — the soul of the universe.

The history of the evolution of Indra's personality, which has been set forth above, would now make it amply clear why the

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[1] It is likely that a peculiar reaction of this tendency is to be seen in the passages where Indra is referred to — rather incongruously — as *kṛta-brahma* (VI. 20.3), *brahman* (VI. 45.7), and *brahmavāhas* (VI. 45.4).

[2] As was to be expected, in course of time, Indra, the national war-god of the Vedic pantheon, came to be regarded as the prototype and the guardian of kingship in ancient India (*AV* XIX. 24.2 ; *MS* II. 1.4 ; *AB* VII. 23.1 ; *ŚPB* III. 9.1.16, 18). The *bhūmi* is said to have chosen Indra as her lord (*AV* XII. 1.37). In *AV* (III. 4.6), the king is significantly referred to as human Indra. Corresponding to this development of the Indra-concept, Brahmaṇaspati must have come to be regarded as the symbol of sacerdotalism (*TB* I. 7.7.4).

Vedic mythology, as a whole, is so very greatly dominated by that god. As indicated elsewhere, in course of time, Indra came to be regarded as the very symbol of the official Vedic religion. This fact is fully confirmed by a peculiar mythological device, which is sometimes employed in the *ṚV*. Side by side with what may be called the official or hierarchical Vedic religion, there had existed, in the Vedic age, several other currents of mythical and religious thought. These latter seem to have been current either among the masses of the Vedic people (as against the hierarchical classes) or among the non-Vedic people. It may be presumed that the religious and mythological ideology of these people was, for several reasons, found to be more or less unacceptable by the guardians of the official Vedic religion, which gradually tended to become sophisticated and hierarchical. Their gods, therefore, must have originally received but scant recognition at the hands of the Vedic poets and priests. In course of time, however, the religious thought of the masses—both Vedic and non-Vedic—must have effectively asserted itself. Consequently their gods must have inevitably forced their way into the Vedic pantheon. With a view to properly consolidating this new position acquired by the 'popular' gods, the Vedic poets, who sponsored them, brought them into close association with Indra—more often artificially than otherwise. Such association with Indra, the symbol of the official Vedic religion, served the purpose of setting the seal, as it were, of official recognition for those gods.[1] The association of Indra with Viṣṇu and with Pūṣan, which is demonstrably artificial and the result of an afterthought, belongs to this category.[2] The popular gods, Viṣṇu and Pūṣan, were, so to say, granted official recognition by associating them with Indra. Except on this assumption, the relations between Viṣṇu and Pūṣan, on the one hand, and Indra, on the other, would remain wholly ununderstandable. [1]

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[1] Another device of a similar character intended for officially introducing a god into the Vedic ritual seems to have been to associate that god with Soma.

[2] *vide* DANDEKAR. "Viṣṇu in the Veda". *Kane Comm. Vol.*, 95-111; "Pūṣan, the pastoral god of the Veda". *NIA* V, 49-66.

Indra seems to have held the position of the official representative of the Vedic religion even in later times. [2] The *govardhana*-mountain episode in the career of Kṛṣṇa [3] is only a mythological reflection of the historical contest between the Vedic religion, on the one hand, and the newly-developed popular Bhāgavata religion, on the other. [4]

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[1] It may be pointed out, in this connection, that when the entry of these popular gods into the Vedic pantheon became inevitable, the Vedic poets, who represented the official Vedic religion, saw to it that, before those popular gods became Vedic gods, such elements in their character, as did not fit in well with the official religious ideology, were more or less obliterated, and that almost a new character was superimposed on them. (*vide* DANDEKAR on Viṣṇu and Pūṣan).

[2] According to SHENDE (XIII AIOC, *Summary*, 1946), Ṛgvedic Indra is transformed in the *Atharvaveda* into a deity of popular appeal to redress private and public grievances. See, in this connection, also RENOU. "Indra dans l'Atharvaveda". *NIA* VIII, 123–129. GAJENDRAGADKAR (XIII AIOC, *Summary*, 1946) points to the striking difference between the Indra of the Veda and the Indra of the epics. While the Vedic Indra, inspite of a not entirely moral conduct, ever remains pre-eminent, the epic Indra is haunted by the shadow of defeat and dethronement.

[3] *Harivaṁśa*, *adhyāyas* 15–18.

[4] The sequel of that episode seems to hint at the victory of the popular religion over the Vedic religion. It is interesting to note, in this connection, that, in a late *Kāvya* by a South Indian poet (17th cent. A. D.), Kṛṣṇa is actually given the title of the 'queller of the pride of Indra' (*vide* O. C. GANGOLY. "Indra-Cult versus Kṛṣṇa-Cult". *JGJRI* VII, 1–27). When ultimately Kṛṣṇa came to be regarded as the chief god of the Hindu pantheon, some epithets of Indra, such as *govinda* and *keśiniṣūdana*, seem to have been transferred to him.

I-61-7 vol - [illegible]

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इन्द्र ने युद्ध को watch किया होगा तभी realistic वर्णन X.105.7 में इन्द्र का 'with jaw uninjured' स्यात् शायद इन्द्र के chin पर चोट लगने का legend है cf IV.18.9. तथा यहाँ उसका negation है।

Macd. VM 67 Trita is a semidivine or divine being who is associated with various gods, Indra being chief of them.